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inks

CARTOON AND COMIC ART STUDIES

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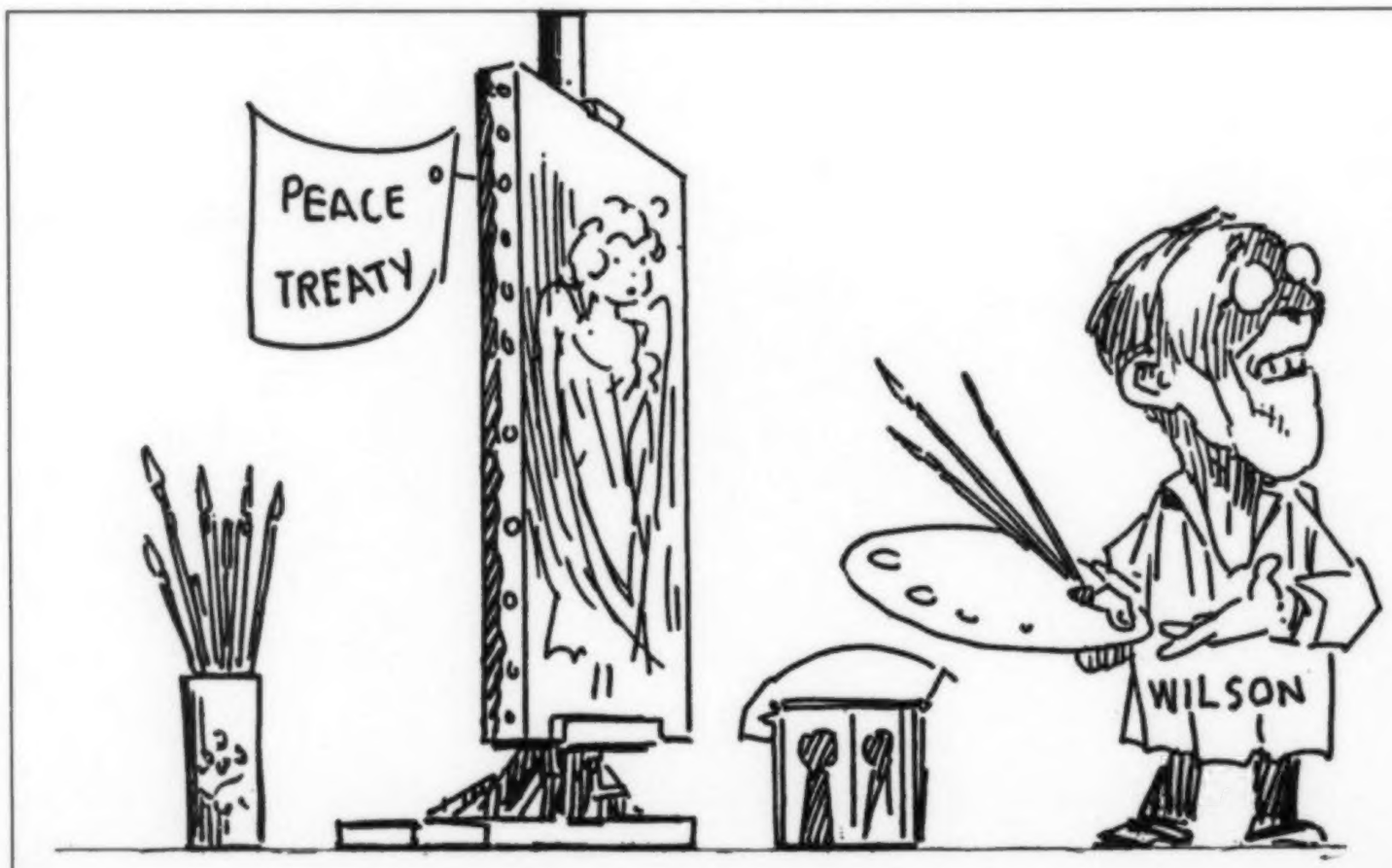
THE RULE AGAINST RIDING ON THE REAR PLATFORM WILL BE MORE RIGIDLY ENFORCED SINCE THE PLATFORM BROKE OFF WITH FATTY HURST.



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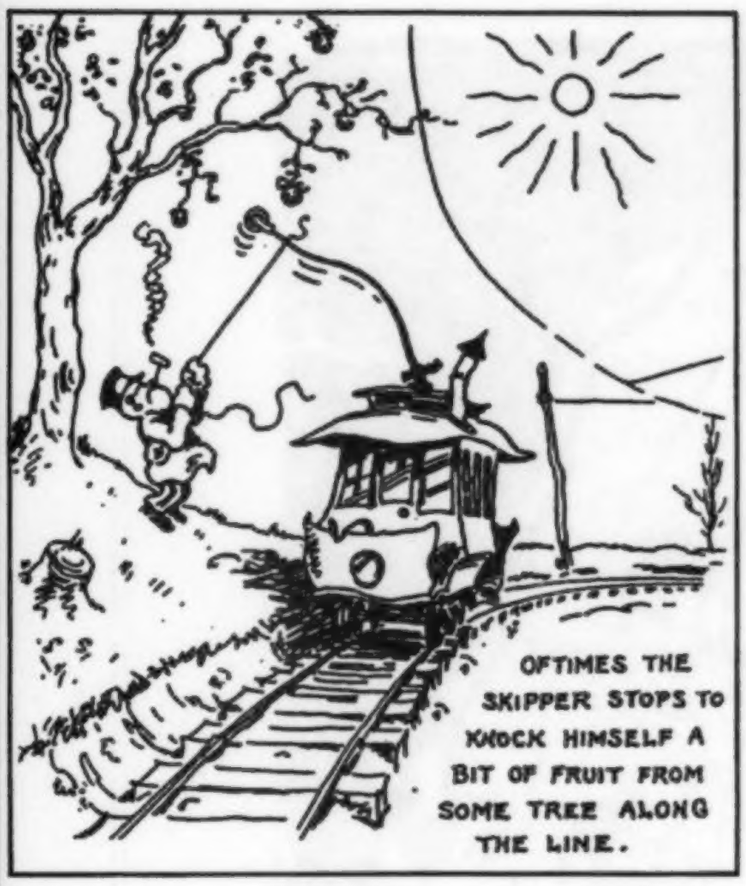
B-BUT OFTISSA, I ASSURE YOU.-



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Comics and the New Literacy: An Essay

BY WILL EISNER

The comics, that long underrated and misunderstood art form, has emerged from its literary closet as a "third" reading medium and it is here to stay. As used in this essay, the term comics refers to sequential graphic narrative such as is usually found in comic books or graphic novels. Now the major media spectrum includes printed text, film and comics.

Reading was mugged on its way to the twenty-first century. Teachers acknowledge that students become "reluctant readers" by the seventh grade. The print medium is under threat. The decline in reading proficiency threatens our unquestioned dependence on printed text. If we look about, we can quickly see what has happened. Printed text has lost its monopoly to another communication technology. Film (including video) has become the major competitor for readership and is the communicator of choice. With its limited demand on a viewer to acquire skills, film makes the time-consuming burden of learning to read seem obsolete. What has happened?

Clearly the drift has been toward electronic instruments that provide information, entertainment, and artificial experience through a combination of sound and imagery. But let us not waste time on ways of controlling its patronage. We have no choice but to accept it. Television, the primary disseminator of film, has become the major source of information for many and it will soon become the electronic library in most American homes. Evidence shows that television-watching has increased as literacy has decreased. Clearly film and video are influencing reading habits.

"Comics and the New Literacy: An Essay" by Will Eisner is printed by permission. Copyright 1993 by Will Eisner. All rights reserved.

How we read has been changing. Viewers "live" through countless lifelike experiences of ordained duration as they watch TV where artificial situations and contrived solutions become integrated into the audience's mental inventory. The actors become "real" people. Most importantly, watching film establishes a rhythm of acquisition. It is a direct challenge to print. The reader, accustomed to the pace of film, grows impatient with long text passages. He or she is used to acquiring stories, ideas and information quickly. As we know, complex concepts become more easily digested when reduced to imagery.

But electronic dominance is not total. Printed communication is still a viable and necessary medium. In fact, it is responding to the challenge of electronic media by accommodation. A partnership of words with imagery has become the logical permutation. The resulting configuration is called comics and it fills the gap between print and film.

Comics are admittedly a mutant based on the earliest form of written communication. Their mix of text and image neatly satisfies the current reader's need for accelerated acquisition of information. They are capable of dealing with both instruction and storytelling. Comics are a formidable teaching tool and can cope with subject matter of considerable sophistication.

The impact of comics on literacy or the process of reading is worth examining. Because of their intelligent conventions and flexible structure, they are a valid reading vehicle in the traditional sense, and with the addition of their universal visual ingredient, they become a cross-cultural medium that transcends language barriers. Learning how to read a comic is an easily acquired skill. Comics are a disciplined arrangement of words and images which require reader participation and involvement. Comics employ both image and text interdependently and require a reasonable word vocabulary. The fundamental difference between comics and illustrated text is that the imagery in comics is intrinsic to narrative content and employs analogous images in sequence as a language. Unfortunately this ease of reading gave comics a reputation for usefulness confined to people of low literacy and limited intellectual accomplishment. Encouragement and acceptance of this medium by the educational establishment has been less than enthusiastic. For a long time comics were not employed for much more than simple entertainment. The predominance of art and the traditional comics format bring more attention to its form than its literary content. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that comics as a reading form were always assumed to be a threat to literacy, as literacy was defined in the pre-visual/electronic era.

During the fifties and sixties when schools were confronted with the competition of comic books for the attention of younger readers, the desperation to preserve traditional reading skills became acute. But no longer do educators question the prevalent use of capital letters in dialogue balloons. The "reading" of the comic book is the important thing. Eloquence of language or its special ability to transmit deep and abstract concepts still retains its potency even when written in capital letters and integrated with sequential images.

Today comics attempt to deal with sophisticated subject matter. One major element of comics that has always provoked resistance to its acceptance as serious reading is imagery. I believe, however, that images are a reflection of experience. Because experience precedes analysis, the intellectual digestive process that results from reading comics takes place at a more rapid pace.

Narrative imagery has had a long history. Primitive images evolved into a symbol-code alphabet which ultimately became written language. Later images were sidelined to serve as supporters of text. The technology of set type made printed books a universal medium. Historically pictures in books were employed to make printed prose more attractive. But when the image is isolated and required to function as a narrative, another standard for it arises. Its employment must conform to a discipline tied to traditional reading. An image does have limitations. Images do not easily articulate abstractions and are not easily employed in the expression of complex thought. An image does, however, have the advantage of defining in absolute terms. It shortcuts the process of delineation that occurs when words are translated and converted into imagery in the brain. Images do

transmit with the speed of sight.

Reading a comic requires a certain contract between the reader and the author. Intellectual participation by the reader is mandatory. The comic begins with the concept of sequentially arranged images and words printed to emulate in structure the written sentence of text. The reader must then contribute the intervening action, time, place and ideas that are implied between the images. Words, in the form of dialogue or descriptions of time and place, are read within the image flow.

Comic art is a form of impressionism. It relies on images that are reduced to extreme simplicity. Usually the cartoonist employs an economy of realism to convey emotion, evoke humor, or, by exaggerations of anatomy, to simulate heroic action. For adventure stories, the art is often more realistically rendered. The text, mostly dialogue, seeks to emulate real speech and is encapsulated in balloons, a necessary device to deal with space and sound. Comics depend on the stereotype and cliché to evoke comprehension drawn from common experiences. Their actors must be caricatures if they are to be recognized. The sequence of events is shown by selected segments taken from a seamless flow of action. The comic book reader quickly digests the suspended animation implicit in an ongoing action that gives intellectual meaning to the whole. The frames (or panels) punctuate the flow and provide the sense of time. Drawing style and skill of draftsmanship have an effect on the transmission of the idea and on the impact of its content. Because of the amount of space normally employed by this medium, the content must often be accommodated to it by a certain brevity.

A critical fact is that the reader is expected to supply the intervening action implied by the images which depict either the start or the end of an action. This problem can be compared to the one facing a playwright who depends on stage setting, dialogue, and the skill of the actor—with the advantages of sound, live action, and real time. The playwright enables the audience to witness reality. With film, the viewer is a passive spectator of recorded reality. In comics, the audience views implied reality and the reader must interpret the meaning of postures and gestures, which, despite the limitation of a "frozen" image, try to convey subtle internal feelings. The arrangement of these postures and gestures in accordance with a common reading convention is the cartoonist's control over telling the story and the progression of reading.

Comics are not a text-reading substitute. They will not make words obsolete. In fact, text is an integral ingredient of comics and complexity of content often determines the ratio of pictures to words. The graphic treatment of letters and words often reinforces their partnership in the cognitive process. This is a reading experience in every sense. Comprehension of the message is, of course, impaired by the inability to read the text of a dialogue or narrative, but the skilled deployment of images generally provides clues to word meaning. Success in teaching foreign languages via comics testifies to this. No one really knows for certain whether the words are read before or after viewing the picture. We do know that they are not read simultaneously. While modern comics begin with a typewritten script, the process of composing each page gives a certain primacy to the image or visual elements. Obviously the skill of the artist has a great deal to do with the product. Modern comics are most often produced by a writer and artist team, and a failure in coordination sometimes affects clarity and readability. Nevertheless, most teams have grown more secure in their craft and the scope of subject matter and quality of content have expanded.

From works relying heavily on text with static pictures to strongly evocative pictures with limited or no text, comics have matured to address more sophisticated experiences and dramatize complex themes. Comics have now established a niche in the library of printed communication and are a testimony to the durability of printed reading material. In the United States alone, the number of specialty comic book shops grew from one hundred to four thousand between 1970 and 1992. This growth and the huge volume of titles published and bought annually are ample evidence that comics are a reading medium whose time has come. Comics belong to the new literacy. ●

A Theological Reflection on Krazy Kat

BY KENNETH BARKER

One of the most creative achievements in the medium of the newspaper comic is George Herriman's *Krazy Kat.* As early as 1924 the noted American art critic Gilbert Seldes devoted a chapter of his book on art and popular culture, *The 7 Lively Arts*, to the work of Herriman. He began with a provocative statement:

> *Krazy Kat*, the daily comic strip of George Herriman is, to me, the most amusing and fantastic and satisfactory work of art produced in America today. With those who hold that a comic strip cannot be a work of art I shall not traffic. The qualities of *Krazy Kat* are irony and fantasy . . . It happens that in America irony and fantasy are practiced in the major arts by only one or two men, producing high-class trash; and Mr. Herriman, working in a despised medium, without an atom of pretentiousness, is day after day producing something essentially fine . . . Since 1914, daily and frequently on Sunday, *Krazy Kat* has appeared in America; in that time we have accepted and praised a hundred fakes from Europe and Asia—silly and trashy plays, bad painting, woeful operas, iniquitous religions, everything paste and brummagem has had its vogue with us; and a genuine, honest native product has gone unnoticed until in the year of grace 1922 a ballet brought it a tardy and grudging acclaim.[1]

OH, WHAT A BOONS IT IS INDEED TO HAVE A GREAT 'MORAL SENSE', OH, WHAT A GIFF IT IS TO PUZZESS THAT WUNDAPL KNACK OF KNOWING RIGHT FROM WRONG.

WHAT MANNER OF PERSON IS THIS OF WHOM YOU PRATE, 'KRAZY' WHO POSSESSES THIS GREAT GIFT, 'MORAL SENSE' - OR, DO YOU DREAM ?

OH, OFFISSA PUPP, KNOW YOU NOT HE ? WHY WHO BUT 'IGNATZ', IGNATZ MICE', HE IS THE L'IL 'MORAL SENSIST' OF WHO I PRATED. VEZZA.

A-AAH - "QUIT YOUR LALLYGAGGING. THAT MOUSE HAS ABOUT AS MUCH 'MORAL SENSE' AS HE HAS FUR ON HIS TAIL - TELL ME ANOTHER, 'KRAZY'.

B-BUT OFFISSA, I ASSURE YOU -

'BRICKS' !! CHOICE BRICKS !!! CHEAP TODAY - FRESH BRICKS !!!

HERB'S WHERE HE LOSES HIS MORAL SENSE.

D'LIKE TO HAVE A NICE FRESH 'BRICK', OR TWO MR. MOUSE - FRESH BAKED, JUST OUT OF THE OVEN, AND DERN CHEAP -

HE'LL FALL.

NO, I DON'T WANT ANY 'BRICKS' !!!

AHH

VERY WELL SIR

MAYBE I CAN TAKE YOUR ORDER FOR ONE, OR TWO 'BRICKS', TO MORROW HUH ?

NO, NONE TOMORROW, EITHER !!

MMM

YOU SEE, OFFISSA 'PUPP' ?

I DO -

HEY, 'KELLY' !!!!

L'IL JIMMIE

HERRIMAN

29 December 1918

We need not be dissuaded by the hyperbolic tone of Seldes' prose. Even if Herriman's art work was not the greatest that America produced at that time, it deserves the serious study and preservation it is now receiving at the hands of people such as Patrick McDonnell, Karen O'Connell, Georgia Liley de Havenon, Bill Blackbeard, M. Thomas Inge and Richard Marschall.[2]

Born in New Orleans on 22 August 1880, young George Joseph Herriman moved to California with his parents at an early age. From 1891 to 1897 he attended Saint Vincent's College, a small Catholic secondary school for boys. He began his professional career early in the twentieth century, working for Pulitzer's *New York World, New York News* and *Los Angeles Examiner* before Hearst brought him back to New York to work on the *Evening Journal. Krazy Kat* actually grew out of a comic series Herriman did for the *Evening Journal, The Dingbat Family* (also known as *The Family Upstairs*) which was begun on 20 June 1910. A kat and mouse were secondary characters and the first missile was thrown by the mouse at the kat on 26 July 1910. *Krazy Kat* became a permanent separate daily strip on 28 October 1913. The full page began on Saturday, 23 April 1916, and later moved to Sunday publication.[3]

Herriman's *Krazy Kat* focuses upon a triangular relationship. Ignatz Mouse is hellbent on assaulting Krazy Kat. At every opportunity he seeks "to nick Krazy's needless noodle," "krease the kat's knob," or "bop the kat's bean" with a well aimed brick. Offisa B. Pupp, custodian of law and order, seeks to prevent this assault upon the kat. His motivation is partly the professional duty of a police officer; partly his own unexpressed love for Krazy. Krazy in turn is the epitome of innocent love. Every brick thrown by Ignatz is eagerly received by the kat as a "tokin of love" rather than an expression of the hate which it actually is. So the mouse assaults the kat; the dog protects the kat; and the kat remains oblivious to the love of the dog and the hate of the mouse. Herriman turned this simple plot into an artistic and literary production which appeared virtually daily from July 1910 until his death in California on 25 April 1944.

Krazy Kat can be read and enjoyed for many reasons: For its imaginative scenery, described by the poet e.e. cummings as "strictly irrational landscape in perpetual metamorphosis."[4] Or, in the words of Gerald Weales, for the "joy of the language—alliteration, bombast, elegant slang."[5] Or for its delightful cast of characters which includes, among many, Walter Cephus Austridge, the dickey bird; Bum Bill Bee, "a peripatetic pilgrim on the road to nowhere"; Gooseberry Sprig, the Duck Duke; Mock Duck, sage of the Orient; Kolin Kelly, the brick merchant who supplies Ignatz with the missiles; Don Kiyote (or Kiyoti), the Mexican bandit and gentleman of invisible means, "the wily wizard of weal or woe"; Mrs. Kwakk Wakk, "lady of loose and limpid language" (a gossip); Roger Roquefort, "the robber rat and his band of reckless rodents"; and Joe Stork, alias Jose Cigueno, "purveyor of progeny to prince and proletariat."[6]

Krazy Kat can also be read and enjoyed for any of several interpretations its basic plot yields, or as a romantic description of unrequited love complicated by the hatred of Ignatz. It can be read on a political level as an expression of the tensions which exist between the collective state and the individual. Such an interpretation was presented by the poet e.e. cummings: "The meteoric burlesk melodrama of democracy is a struggle between society (Offissa Pupp) and the individual (Ignatz Mouse) over an ideal (our heroine)—a struggle from which, again and again and again, emerges one stupendous fact: namely, that the ideal of democracy fulfils herself only if, and whenever, society fails to suppress the individual."[7] Or it can be read, as it was in 1969 by Gerald Weales, Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, as something more abstract: "I prefer Krazy Kat as a parable of good (bad) intentions gone awry; for me, it is a sad-happy dramatization of the transforming distance between throwing hand and receiving head, between impulse and act."[8]

I propose that Herriman's work can also be read as a profound if not wholly orthodox expression of religious faith. Indeed at times, whether fully intended or not, it is an expression of truths which are wholly consistent with a mature understanding of the Christian faith.

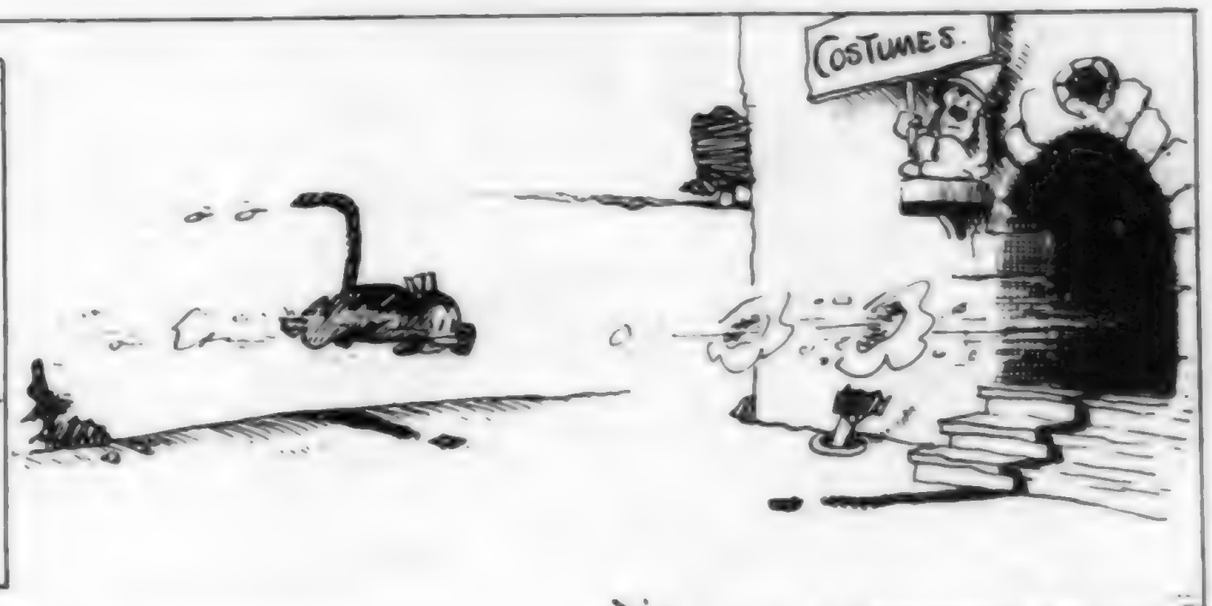
A careful perusal of Herriman's pages reveals frequent use of traditional Biblical terms. Ignatz is described as the embodiment of evil. He is explicitly named the sinner; one full of sin and conceit; with a soul of sin and shame; evil in his sinful eye; burned by the fires of his soul's wickedness; sinister and full of evil; a sinful sinister scorpion. Moreover his sinful nature finds expression in deeds which are also frequently described as sinful or wicked. Seldom is Ignatz presented with any redeeming virtues or vestiges of goodness. He is a one-dimensional figure; the very embodiment of evil. He is a devil incarnate.

One tenuous exception is a conversation between Offisa Pupp and a psychiatrist:

> **Psychiatrist:** Ah but, my dear, good constable, that "mouse" possesses a no small measure of valor.

OH-HO - SO 'IGNATZ MICE' YOU IS A LIL INFIDDLE HEH ?
I DONT BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS', I'M TOO BROAD-MINDED, AND ADVANCED FOR SUCH NONSENSE.

WE OPEN, WITH A SCENE, RIFE WITH SKEPTICISM, AND HERESY.



GOLLIX, YOU GOT NO IDA HOW THIS OUTFIT MAKES ME FEEL YULE-TIDISH, AND XMASY. IF ONLY IT CAN HAVE THE SAME EFFECT ON 'IGNATZ MICE' - L'IL UNBELIEVA -
IGNATZ MICE !! BEHOLD !!! I AM SENTA KLAWS -

WE GET THIS FAR, AND YET THE ATMOSPHERE OF UNBELIEF AND INFIDELITY ABOUNDS IN COPIOUS AMPLITUDE.

FORGIVE ME FOR DOUBTING, MR. CLAUS. I REALLY DID NOT THINK YOU EXISTED.
ALL IS FIGGIVEN, I EXCEPT YOUR APOLOGY - A-RISE !!!
OH-HO - THAT TAIL.
IT WAS EASY.

WE CLOSE, WITH A SCENE, RIFE WITH SKEPTICISM, AND HERESY.

HERRIMAN

15 December 1918

THE HOURS I SPEND WITH YOU DEAR HAH-HA-HART -
KELLY'S EXCLUSIVE BRICK YARD
IS LIKE A STRING OF PUH-HUH-HEARLS T'MEEE -
KELLY'S EXCLUSIVE BRICK YARD
I COUNT THEM O-VA EVEREEE ONE UH-PART -
KELLY'S EXCLUSIVE BRICK YARD.
MY ROSIE REE MY-HY ROSIE REE -
KELLY'S EXCLUSIVE BRICK YARD
EACH HOUR A BRICK -
EACH BRICK A PUH-RAYER -
FERRIMAN

15 October 1916

Offisa Pupp: Hah. But you make no mention of the vagabond in the wastrel.

Psychiatrist: "Vagabond," aye, and truly so. His sinful tossage of "bricks" proclaims it—yet, it hardly obscures the valiant within him, withal.

Offisa Pupp: And for his sins do I jail him—to that duty do I confine my efforts.

Psychiatrist: Surely, sir, you could spare a slight eye to his virtue—'t were well worth a wee "winkie," eh?

Offisa Pupp: Not a blink. Not a peek. I seek sin—and I punish it, even should it throb in the heart of an angel.

Psychiatrist: Ah, well, I must fare me onward— Yet, be if you can a bit less brusk—and a mite more mindful to the merit of his mettle.

Offisa Pupp: I could encourage it with a bit more tappage with this smacker [his baton].

Psychiatrist: Good-bye, "Kop."

Offisa Pupp: Goo'-bye, "Prof." Hmm. He does spend a pile of pennies for "bricks"—That's courage in a way—Tossing them is no weakling's job—Um-m—Glory of a sort does seem to gleam about him—a bit. B-B-BUT.[9]

Offisa Pupp remains sceptical.

Ignatz's pursuit of evil is very self-centered. When his wife protests his mistreatment of the kat, Ignatz shouts, "Woman have a care. Don't you dare interfere with my pursuit of happiness."[10] Ignatz does, however, possess a sense of guilt or at least an awareness that what he does may bring hurt to others and retribution upon himself. On at least one occasion he flees when no one is actually pursuing him and Herriman comments, "The wicked flee when no one pursueth."[11]

Offissa B. Pupp is clearly and consistently portrayed as the protector of law and order. Lest readers, following e.e. cummings, too readily interpret this to be an oppressive form of law and order, it should be pointed out that Offissa Pupp is not usually vindictive in his suppression of evil. It is true that he is constantly putting Ignatz in jail, and on occasion he can be portrayed as being overly diligent:

Offissa Pupp: I arrested him today for the brick he might toss at you tomorrow.

Krazy Kat: Ah, then it's for the brick he can't toss tidday an' the one he hasn't tossed timorra.

Offissa Pupp: Exactly—my dear "Krazy"—What else did you think?

Krazy Kat: I had a ida it was for the brick he DID toss yestidday.[12]

But the dog's prime motivation is the protection of the innocent kat. If Offisa Pupp could be assured that Ignatz would no longer assault the kat, he would gladly abandon his vigilant supervision of the mouse.

Law and order in the person of Pupp is not evil; it is weak. The law or lawman with the best intention cannot control, much less eradicate the evil which is expressed in Ignatz. One is reminded of the Apostle Paul's ambivalence about the law. "Is the law sin? God forbid?"[13] Is the law able to bring deliverance to the oppressed kat or reform to the evil mouse? No. And why not? Again in Pauline language, "Because the law is weak through the flesh."[14]

Krazy Kat is able to transcend the power of evil. By interpreting the evil assault of Ignatz as an expression of love, Krazy is able to transform the mouse's evil intent. What the law cannot do because of weakness, Krazy does through the power of love. The evil work of Ignatz is rendered powerless because Krazy accepts it as an expression of good. Krazy even expresses gratitude for the bricks thrown in hate and frequently calls Ignatz "dahlink," "dollin," or "l'il ainjil" for his efforts. When struck by the brick he breaks out into joyful gospel song, "There is a heppy land, fur fur away."[15] Or the more extended song inspired by the rosary:

The hours I spend with you, dear Hah-ha-hart
Is like a string of puh-huh-hearls t'mee
I count them o-va, evereee one uh-part
My rosie-ree, my-hy rosieree
Each hour, a brick
Each brick a puh-rayer.[16]

Careful readers will notice that Krazy's gender has not yet been identified. Unlike Offissa B. Pupp who is masculine, and Ignatz who is the husband of Matilda (sometimes Magnolia) and the father of Milton, Irving and Marshall, Krazy's gender identity is ambivalent. At times the kat is masculine; at times feminine; at times seemingly neither or both.

Is Herriman subtly exploring the field of bi-sexualism? If the triangle is read as nothing more than an expression of romantic love, such an interpretation might be possible. However such an interpretation is highly questionable since Herriman himself indicated that Krazy was "something like a sprite, an elf. . .a spirit—a pixie—free to butt into anything".[17] The kat was obviously symbolic. So when one recalls that in traditional Jewish and Christian thought God

transcends sexuality, Krazy Kat could be the symbol of a love which also transcends the limits of sexuality.

But there is one major item in the comic which gives me pause in reading too much explicit Judaeo-Christian thought into Herriman's work. Nowhere does Krazy express any desire that Ignatz would desist from his sinful activity. Krazy almost revels in it. When the possibility of Ignatz' reform is contemplated, the kat says, "My how turbil."[18]

One could argue, of course, that the conversion of Ignatz would have brought the conflict, and the comic strip, to an end. But Herriman could have continued his work even with some expressed hope for the redemption of Ignatz. To be sure Krazy is not wholly oblivious to the distinction between good and evil. The kat can speak of deliverance from iniquity and can commend Ignatz for his "wundafil kneck" of knowing right from wrong.[19] It seems rather that Krazy's love for Ignatz is blind to the mouse's evil intention. The brick, which is described as sin's most diabolic symbol, the expression of evil and the instrument of felony, is for Krazy a symbol of love, a token of esteem. What we have here is the transcending of evil rather than the conversion or reform of the evil-doer.

One is tempted to say that Herriman portrays a dualism in which good and evil remain forever locked in battle, neither able to destroy the other; each bound by fate or blind chance. Such a dualism, known in Christian circles as the Manichaean heresy, has traditionally been understood to be inconsistent with the orthodox Judaeo-Christian belief that God is greater than evil and will one day bring evil to final judgment. But if evil cannot be completely eradicated, at least in this world, Herriman suggests it can be overcome with good.

A related issue is whether Krazy's love of being beaned with a brick is a form of masochism. If it is symbolic of a divine love, does this not imply that the suffering of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners, foreshadowed in the Old Testament concept of a suffering servant-nation, is also masochistic? One must admit that Krazy certainly goes out of his way at times to invite a "tossage" of the brick. Similarly, Jesus is portrayed in the Gospels as setting his face to Jerusalem in the knowledge it would mean his death.[20] However, with regard to Jesus there is equally strong evidence to suggest that he recoiled from his impending "baptism" of fire.[21] His march to destiny is closer to the choice of a Mahatma Gandhi or a Martin Luther King, Jr. than that of a deluded fanatic. Krazy's behaviour is admittedly more puzzling when it seems to embrace no redemptive purpose.

In Herriman's view, fate plays a key role in life. At times fate can frustrate the evil intent. Rain falls and dissolves the evil brick before it can be thrown, or lightning strikes and demolishes the brick. But fate is fate. It has no moral preference. So at other times the brick is delivered by the hand of fate rather than the dexterity of Ignatz. A brick is carried aloft by a balloon which is punctured by the peck of a bird. It falls to the ground and strikes Krazy on the bean. A brick floating down the stream goes over a waterfall and strikes Krazy who is boating at its base. Ignatz, failing to find Krazy, tosses the brick into a rubbish can only to have it land on Krazy who happens to be in the can. Herriman is clearly aware that much evil is brought upon us not by the immediate hand of the evil-doer but by a combination of natural disasters and apparently accidental events. On one occasion, at least, he suggests that fate has an element of mercy: "Fate allows no soul, however sinful, to suffer long."[22] Does he refer to divine mercy or merely the eventual termination of suffering by death?

If Herriman does not provide a definitive solution to the age-old mystery of iniquity, it should not surprise us. Such a solution has evaded the skills of even the most profound theologians. Herriman clearly describes a universe in which the struggle continues and seems at times to be insoluble. But he is not without a message of consolation. Even if evil cannot be wholly removed from the human scene it can be overcome or transcended by a love which refuses to accept evil for what it intends. Krazy Kat, like the suffering servant of Isaiah, takes the abuse and, by its stripes (or blows of the brick) brings healing. Like one hung upon a Roman cross, the kat, in effect, prays, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Krazy determines not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good.

I would, however, offer another word of caution. Krazy's innocent love shows some discretion. When anyone other than Ignatz, Don Kiyoti for example, throws the brick, Krazy can reply in anger.[23] The kat is not prepared to ignore every expression of injustice and hurt. But then one must remember that even Jesus could sometimes respond to human injustice with righteous indignation. Life in Herriman's Coconino County is no more simplistic than life in first century Palestine or twentieth century North America.

George Herriman was a very private person. To my knowledge he made no public comments about his religious faith. However, his education in Saint Vincent's College provided him with not only the language of traditional Christian theology but also some important theological concepts. His reflective mind drew inspiration from a wide variety of sources, and one of these, I believe, was the language and thought of the Christian faith. ●

ANOTHER 'GEM' IS LOOSED UPON THE WORLD OF ART'— MR. MICHAEL O'KOBALT', ARTIST, PAINTER OF PORTRAITS, MENDER OF SINKS, KEYS, AND SHOT-RIFLES, BUYER OF OF KATNIP, AND LAVENDER TO THE ROYAL FAMILY ═ (1)

THERE, MR. MOUSE', IT IS FINISHED, AND I MUST ADMIT I HAVE LIMNED A PERPETUATION OF THE MOST CLASSIC FEATURES EVER ENDOWED A LIVING BEING — MY FEE IS ONE DOLLAR AND SIX BITS, INCLUDING THE FRAME — IT SHALL BE DELIVERED TO YOU BY SPEEDY MESSENGER, WITHIN THE HOUR ——

ISSUING FROM THE STUDIO OF SIGNS, PEACES, AND INTERIORS, 2ND HAND FALSE TEETH, AND POPULAR PURVEYOR

STUDIO

DELIVER IT SAFELY, AND SPEEDILY, KRAZY-

IT SHELL BE DID.

(2)

THERE IS A HEPPY LEND

AH, SO THAT'S THE SPEEDY MESSENGER, HUH?

(3)

FUR- FUR A- WA-A-AY-

WELL, HE CAN DELIVER ME — ALSO-

(4)

WHERE THEY HAS HEM- IN- NEGGS

HOME, JAMES !!

(5)

SEV- RI-I-I-IL TIMES A DAY —

(6)

LIL AINJIL, HOW NETURAL HE LOOKS, ALMOST I COULD OBSERVE A QUIVA IN HIS WHISKA —

(7)

O. HOW THE BORDAS YELL —

(8)

PLOB !!

ZIP —

(9)

NETURAL, OH SO NETURAL — EVEN UNTO HIS HEBITS — SWEETNISS —

FOOL-

(10)

IT'S SURE IS A GOOD TAKE OFF OF HIS UGLY MUG, 'KRAZY,' I MUST SAY —

OH, 'GOOD' IS NO WORD FOR IT OFFISSA PUPP, IT'S SO POSITIVELY NETURAL HE THREW A DORNICK AT ME — AINT THAT WUNDAFIL ?

(11)

WELL S'LONG, 'KRAZY,' LOOK OUT THAT PICTURE ISN'T 'NATURAL' ENOUGH TO BITE YOU —

ADIOS, OFFISSA, 'IGNATZ' IS IN A HURRY TO GET THIS —

(12)

GOL-DINGIT, ONLY MIDNIGHT !! THESE LONG WINTER NIGHTS SURE GET MY GOAT —

HERRIMAN

26 November 1916

AH BUT MY DEAR GOOD CONSTABLE THAT MOUSE POSSESSES A NO SMALL MEASURE OF VALOR -

HAH- BUT YOU MAKE NO MENTION OF THE VAGABOND IN THE WASTREL

KRAZY KAT

"VAGABOND" AVE, AND TRULY SO - HIS SINFUL TOSSAGE OF BRICKS PROCLAIMS IT -- YET IT HARDLY OBSCURES THE VALIANT WITHIN HIM, WITHAL

AND FOR HIS SINS DO I JAIL HIM - TO THAT DUTY DO I CONFINE MY EFFORTS

SURELY, SIR, YOU COULD SPARE A SLIGHT EYE TO HIS VIRTUE - 'T WERE WELL WORTH A WEE "WINKIE," - EH?

NOT A BLINK, NOT A PEEK. I SEEK SIN - AND I PUNISH IT, EVEN SHOULD IT THROB IN THE HEART OF AN ANGEL

AH. WELL, I MUST FARE ME ONWARD - YET BE IF YOU CAN, A BIT LESS BRUSK - AND A MITE MORE MINDFUL TO THE MERIT OF HIS METTLE

I COULD ENCOURAGE IT WITH A BIT MORE TAPPAGE WITH THIS SMACKER

GOOD-BYE. "HOP"

GOO-BYE, PROF

HMM- HE DOES SPEND A PILE OF PENNIES FOR "BRICKS" - THAT'S COURAGE, IN A WAY - - TOSSING THEM IS NO WEAKLING'S JOB -- UM-M - GLORY OF A SORT DOES SEEM TO GLEAM ABOUT HIM A BIT

B B BUT

JAIL.

3-23

NICE SUNRISE

PRIDDY SUNSET.

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23 March 1941

NOTES

1. Gilbert Seldes, *The 7 Lively Arts* (New York: Sagamore Press Inc., 1957), 207-208.

2. See, for example, Patrick McDonnell, Karen O'Connell, and Georgia Liley de Havenon, *Krazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman* (New York: Abrams, 1986); Bill Blackbeard, "The Forgotten Years of George Herriman," *Nemo* 1 (June 1983): 50-60; M. Thomas Inge, "Krazy Kat as American Dada Art," *Comics and Culture* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1990), 41-57; and Richard Marschall, *America's Great Comic-Strip Artists* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), 96-119.

3. McDonnell et al, *Krazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman*, 58.

4. e.e. cummings, introduction to *Krazy Kat* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1946), 1.

5. Gerald Weales, "The Anatomy of a Love-Hate Klassic," *Life*, 12 December 1969, 12.

6. McDonnell et al., *Krazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman*, 63.

7. cummings, *Krazy Kat*, 7.

8. Weales, "The Anatomy of a Love-Hate Klassic."

9. 23 March 1941.

10. 25 August 1918.

11. 7 May 1922. This is a quotation of Prov. 28:1.

12. 25 September 1938.

13. Romans 7:7.

14. Romans 8:3.

15. Krazy frequently sang snatches from this popular Protestant hymn. On at least one occasion, Herriman's humor is presented as a parody:

> There is a heppy land fur fur a-wa-a-ay
> Where they has hem-in-eggs sev-ri-i-i-i-il times a day
> O how the bordas yell. (26 November 1916)

Though Herriman often spoofed excessive crusades such as prohibition, which were supported by zealous Protestants, Catholics, and even secularists, it is doubtful that he intended in this spoof a wholesale criticism of Protestantism. It is also doubtful that his extensive use of Yiddish bore any relationship to his view of Christianity.

16. 15 October 1916.

17. McDonnell et al, *Krazy Kat: The Comic Art of George Herriman*, 54.

18. 31 December 1922.

19. 15 December 1918; 29 December 1918.

20. Luke 9:51. Jesus also brushed aside warnings not to make his final journey.

21. Luke 12:50. In addition, Jesus expressed hesitation in the Garden of Gethsemane. See Mark 14:36; Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42.

22. 2 April 1922.

23. 8 February 1920; see also 27 February 1921.

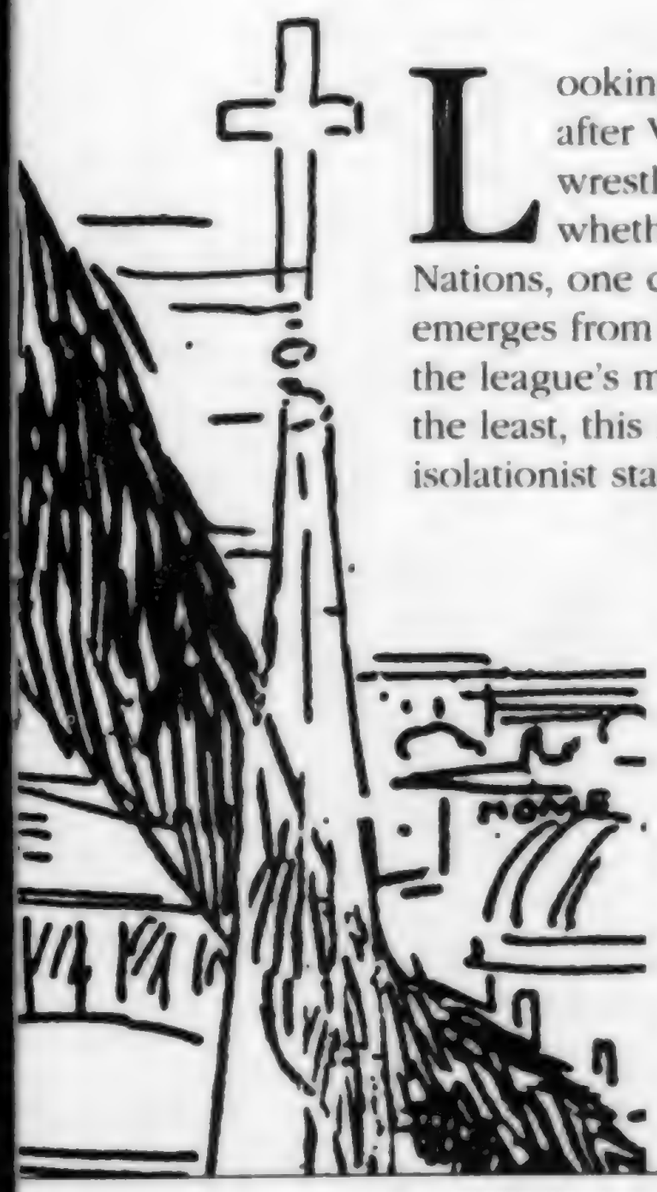
Crusading

for World Peace

Ding Darling, Woodrow Wilson, and the League of Nations

BY RICHARD SAMUEL WEST

Jay N. "Ding" Darling (1876-1962), longtime cartoonist for the Des Moines Register, is widely remembered as a conservative cartoonist, but close examination of his work in a variety of areas—the tariff, rights of labor, prohibition, the New Deal—reveals his politics to have been far more progressive than the average Republican and even more progressive than most Americans of his day. No issue exemplifies this progressive streak more fully than Ding's views on international disarmament and world peace. This paper examines Ding's work over a twenty year period, from his earliest comments on the issue of peace between nations during the Theodore Roosevelt Administration to the last gasps of the pro-League of Nations movement during the Coolidge Administration.



Looking back on the pivotal years after World War I when the nation wrestled with the question of whether or not to join the League of Nations, one cartoonist—Ding Darling—emerges from the hot and furious debate as the league's most ardent champion. To say the least, this loyal Republican from the isolationist state of Iowa was not the most likely proponent of a Democratic president's plan to ensure international peace.

From the time he began cartooning in 1902, Ding aligned himself with Teddy Roosevelt, whom he admired in equal parts for his bold acts of leadership and his physical courage. When TR vastly expanded the nation's parkland, Ding became an advocate for conservation. When TR attacked the nation's millionaires, Ding decried the greediness of the wealthy. When TR bolted the GOP in 1912, Ding became a Progressive, too. And when TR became a spokesman for preparedness in the early days of World War I, Ding pushed the issue in his cartoons.

But unlike TR, Ding was no jingoist. His first images of war came to him through his father, Marc Darling. The elder Darling had been brutalized by his participation in the American Civil War, and he did not romanticize the experience with his children. The respectable citizens of Sioux City, Iowa, where Ding grew up, valued physical courage and honored heroism, but they were circumspect people who did not go about looking for trouble. Trouble was easy enough to find in the Sioux City of Ding's youth because it was a wild, hard town, full of brothels and gambling halls. Rarely a week went by when the body of some poor soul did not turn up in the Missouri River. Ding appears to have been a product of all of these influences. He was not a physical coward, but neither did he lust for the fight. For instance, despite being the perfect age, there is no evidence that he ever considered enlisting in the armed forces during the Spanish-American War. While Ding never knew the activities of war, he fully appreciated its brutal cost.

And loss of human life was not the only cost of war. From his earliest days as a cartoonist, Ding railed against excessive military spending. In one 1909 cartoon titled, "The Great International Rat Hole," Ding pictured the dominant countries of the world dumping "Public Tax" monies into a hole, labeled "For a navy that can whip everybody else's." Ding laments in the caption, "[They are] pouring hundreds of millions in annually, and it's no nearer full now than when they began.[1] At the same time,

every international effort to curb the war impulse received his gentle support. When, for example, in August of 1911, England, France and the U.S. signed a treaty outlawing war, Ding greeted the idealistic agreement with hope, showing the three world powers marching arm-in-arm down the slope of Mount Olympus after having fitted a disgruntled Mars with a safety valve.[2]

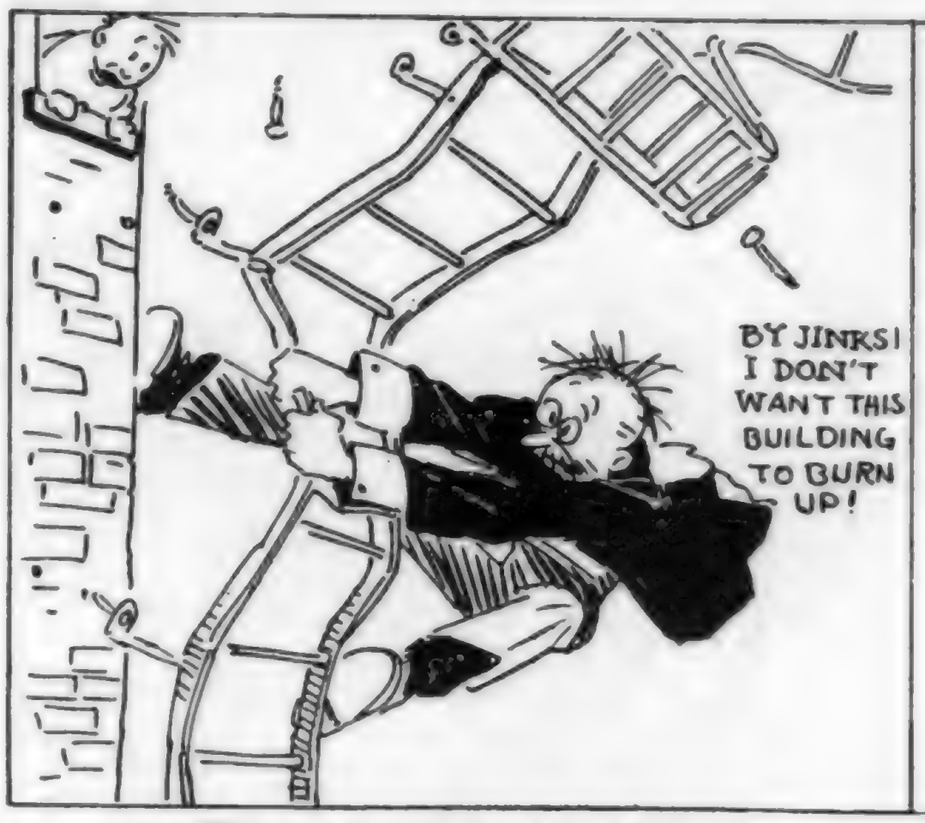
In 1914, when war broke out in Europe, Ding drew the despairing cartoon, "After all, civilization is only skin deep." In it, he pictured the primal instincts of Man, carrying the club of war, skulking through the edifices humankind has created to art, science, learning, and brotherhood. In another cartoon titled, "Forever going to school but never learning," Ding depicted the world as a school boy wearing a dunce's cap. Mars has him by the ear in an effort to get him to pay attention to the lesson on the board, which reads: "War = death, paralyzed industry, endless sorrow, nobody's gain, famine, destitution, waste, misery."[3]

Not only had humanity never learned, but Ding believed it never would. In the cartoon, "From the beginning of time," he shook his head in disbelief at the "experts" who believed that this war, simply because of its unparalleled ferocity, would be the last.[4] Inevitably, the fighting in Europe changed Ding's views on military spending. In 1915, he joined TR in the call for preparedness. In his view, the threat posed by the violence and hatred gripping the European continent justified such spending. Ding depicted the U.S. military as a shepherd fast asleep, oblivious to the animals representing threats to American security that trample on international laws and the rights of a neutral nation.[5]

THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL RAT HOLE
PUBLIC TAX
CHINA
WAR FUND
U.S.
FOR A NAVY THAT CAN WHIP EVERYBODY ELSE'S
POURING HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS IN ANNUALLY, AND IT'S NO NEARER FULL NOW THAN WHEN THEY BEGAN.

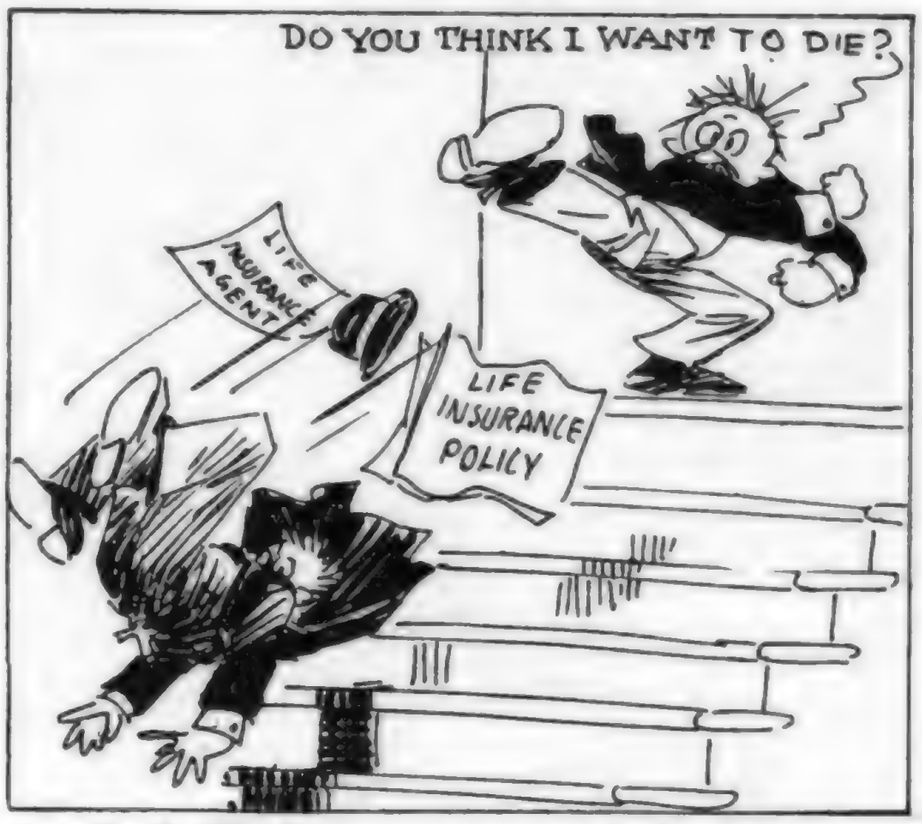
19 October 1909

But Ding and TR were in the minority. Most Americans saw the war as a European crisis in which we had no stake, a crisis that we could easily avoid if we only maintained neutrality. Stockpiling armaments did not strike most Americans as a neutral act. Ding emphatically rejected this logic. To those who argued that preparedness invited war, he showed a desperate soul pulling down a fire escape because fire escapes make fires, burning up his umbrellas because umbrellas make it rain, and shooing away the police, because policemen bring burglars. In the final panel, Ding places the poor soul in an insane asylum where he comments in his own



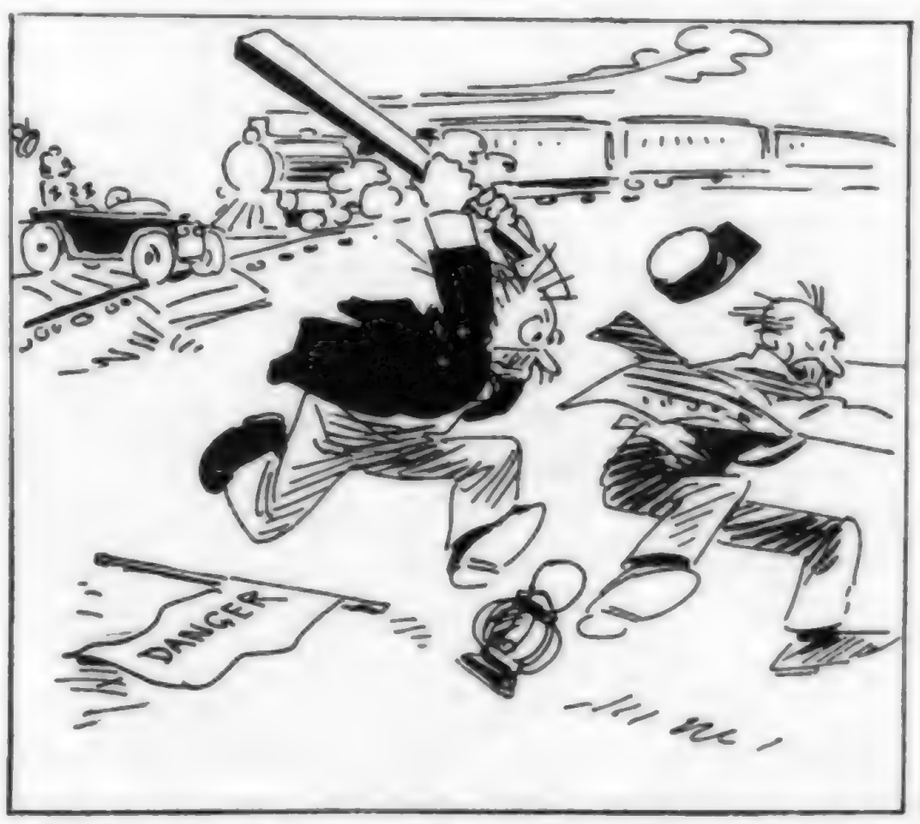
Fire escapes make fires—

And umbrellas make it rain—



And life insurance causes deaths—

And Policemen bring burglars—



And switchmen make railroad accidents—

And insane asylums make people crazy.

Preparedness Invites War—Likewise Fire Escapes Invite Fire. 15 October 1916

defense, "Why, I'm no worse than the man who said preparedness invites war."[6]

The debate quickly polarized the nation, as TR became identified as the nation's most outspoken belligerent and William Jennings Bryan, Ding's *bête noir*, took on the role of leading pacifist. In his dozen or so years as a cartoonist, Ding had never passed up an opportunity to ridicule Bryan. As Wilson's well-meaning but foolish secretary of state, Bryan gave him many opportunities, perhaps the choicest being his soft-headed campaign for world peace in the midst of war. On the other hand, Ding was always kindly disposed to TR's point of view, even when the former president's volcanic outbursts seemed to hurt more than help the cause they both championed.[7]

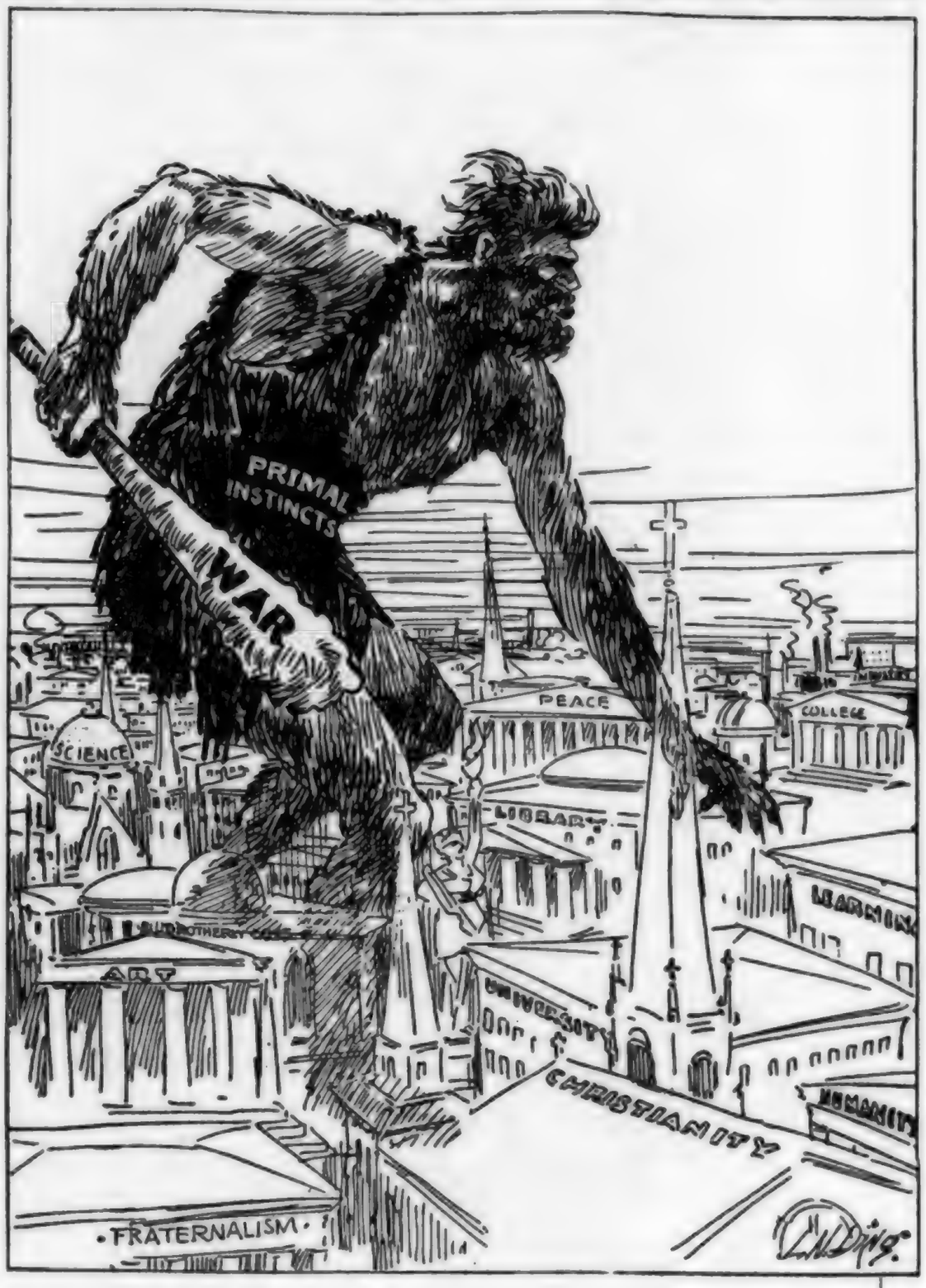
Though TR held center stage on the issue of preparedness, by 1916 President Woodrow Wilson had become an advocate for preparedness too. Ding did not vote for Wilson in either 1912 or 1916, but he did support the president on occasion when he thought Wilson was right.[8] Wilson had joined the ranks of preparedness advocates only reluctantly. Wilson, the man, was constitutionally repelled by acts of violence. Like Ding, he deplored the toll of war and could make little sense out of it. But he had been won over to the issue of preparedness over two years' time, as he sought to execute his delicate policy of neutrality. Though it was a diplomatic success, it posed vexing problems as an economic policy: Wilson expected the British and the Germans to respect America's right of commerce, but the maneuverings of war made that theory difficult, if not impossible, to execute in practice. Wilson was incensed by Germany's decision to fire upon any ship that was found in the war zone, but he sympathized with England's naval blockade of Germany, even though both practices disrupted American commerce. Clearly, the policy of neutrality would not hold indefinitely.[9]

Even before he asked for a declaration of war, President Wilson was devoting most of his thoughts to the type of world that should be created after the war was over—a vision that would justify the carnage and the madness. Ding drew his first cartoon on the subject of an international league during the 1916 campaign season. The cartoon depicted war as a robber, making off with the world's savings while "this old world" sits in the corner, bound, gagged, and bloodied. In the caption, Ding asks, "Is the answer to this [act of violence] an international police force?" Wilson, it appears, had already concluded that the answer was yes. Ding would arrive at that position more slowly.[10]

Meanwhile, the tone of his cartoons became increasingly belligerent. He was frustrated by America's—and particularly the Midwest's—isolationist tendencies, and believed the country was in for a rude awakening. In January 1917 he pictured Uncle Sam looking on as the Rights of Humanity lay crippled at a roadside. Ding asked his audience what they expected of the U.S.: "Pharisee or Good Samaritan?" The excesses of war led many an artist to indulge in melodramatic images, and Ding was no exception. Increasingly, he was inclined to depict the German military machine as a python intent on swallowing the globe, or the German leadership as butchers, carving up the countries they invaded like meat in a slaughterhouse.[11]

In April, Ding got what he wanted, what he thought was America's only option: a declaration of war. The potency of the moment, however, gave him pause. Instead of glorying in the news or swaggering

AFTER ALL, CIVILIZATION IS ONLY SKIN DEEP



[1914]

IS THE ANSWER TO THIS AN INTERNATIONAL POLICE FORCE?

[1918]

THE PYTHON

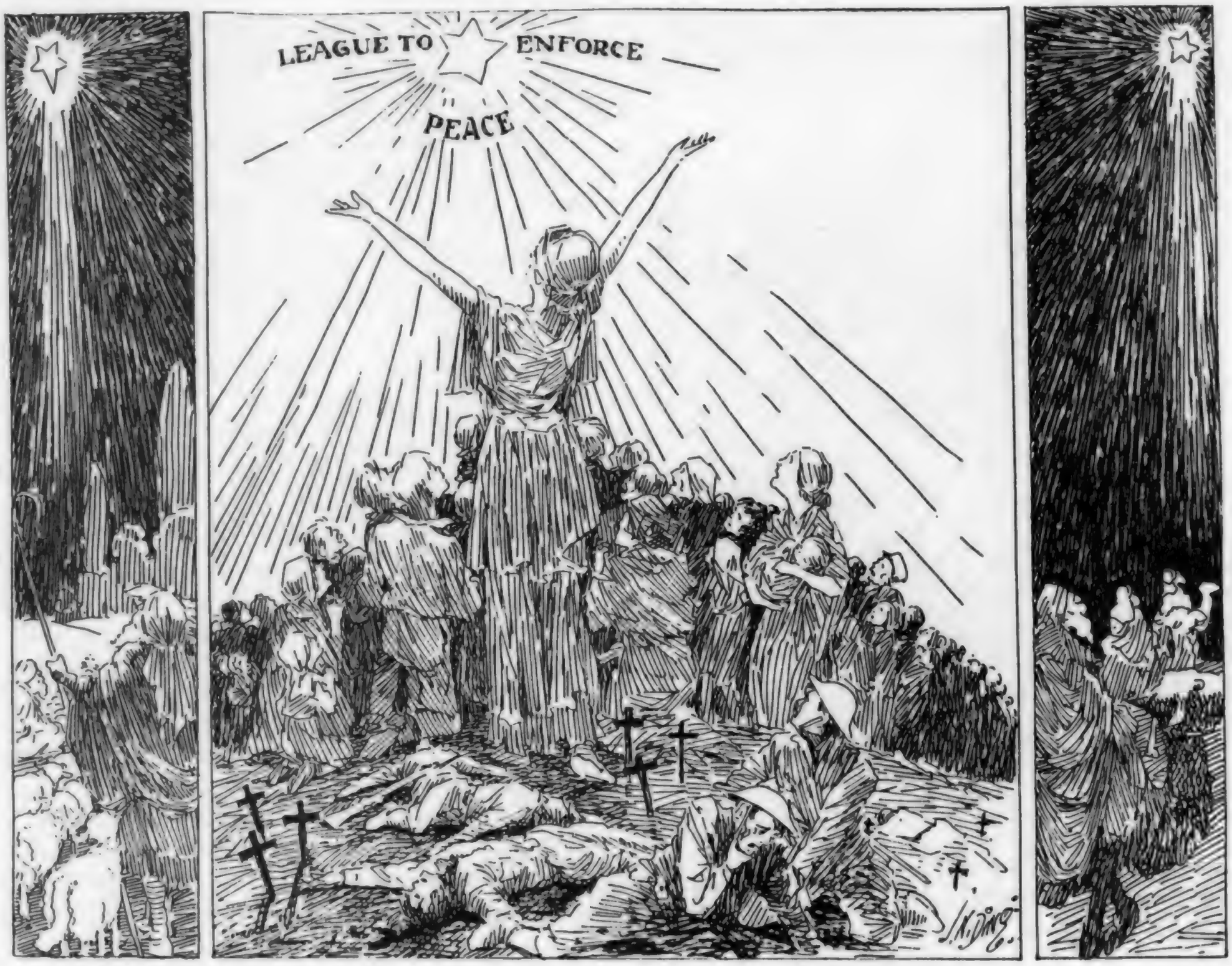
[1918]

about the global barnyard, Ding struck a philosophic note. He proclaimed the U.S. renunciation of neutrality to be "Our First Victory." The cartoon featured a determined Uncle Sam unsheathing the sword of battle while his alter ego cringes on the ground, a cowering pathetic figure, protecting a hoard of gold. At the close of the war, Ding would write of that time that "we, as a nation . . . passed from a state of blind and selfish pacifism to one of active belligerency, righteous determination, self-sacrifice and glorious victory."[12]

Throughout the war, Ding kept the home fires burning by exhorting Americans to renounce pettiness and embrace the best within themselves. He showed soldiers of different classes sharing food with one another and commented, "Some of these days we'll learn to apply the same lesson at home." He pictured a mother waiting on the porch for a letter from her soldier son and reminded his audience, "Buying Liberty Bonds seems a simple matter when we consider the burdens others are carrying." When he overheard a Des Moines housewife at a party say she was tired of giving and giving, he funneled his outrage into the next day's cartoon. Titled, "Tired of giving? You don't know what it is to be tired," he drew a portrait of a distraught mother and child sitting amid the bombed-out ruins of their home, exhausted, hungry, disconsolate.[13]

In the fall of 1918, as the war rushed toward a conclusion, Ding could not contain his optimism. In a cartoon that expressed sentiments diametrically opposite to the cynical one he drew at the beginning of the war, he asked "Are we completing a cycle?" In the four-panel cartoon he reasoned: "Individuals used to settle their differences with the stone ax until they learned it was more profitable to co-operate and join together in clans. Clans fought each other for centuries until they found that through the medium of a state they could settle their differences without bloodshed. States attempted to settle their differences through the medium of the cannon and sword until they learned the advantage of national unity. Nations are now fighting the bloodiest war in history for supremacy. Is it not possible that out of it may come an international league to enforce peace?"[14]

The signing of the armistice in November 1918 marked the end of the military conflict and the beginning of a diplomatic war. The Paris Peace Conference would turn into one of the most tragic chapters of world history. During the two years that followed the armistice, President Wilson went from being regarded as a world savior and international



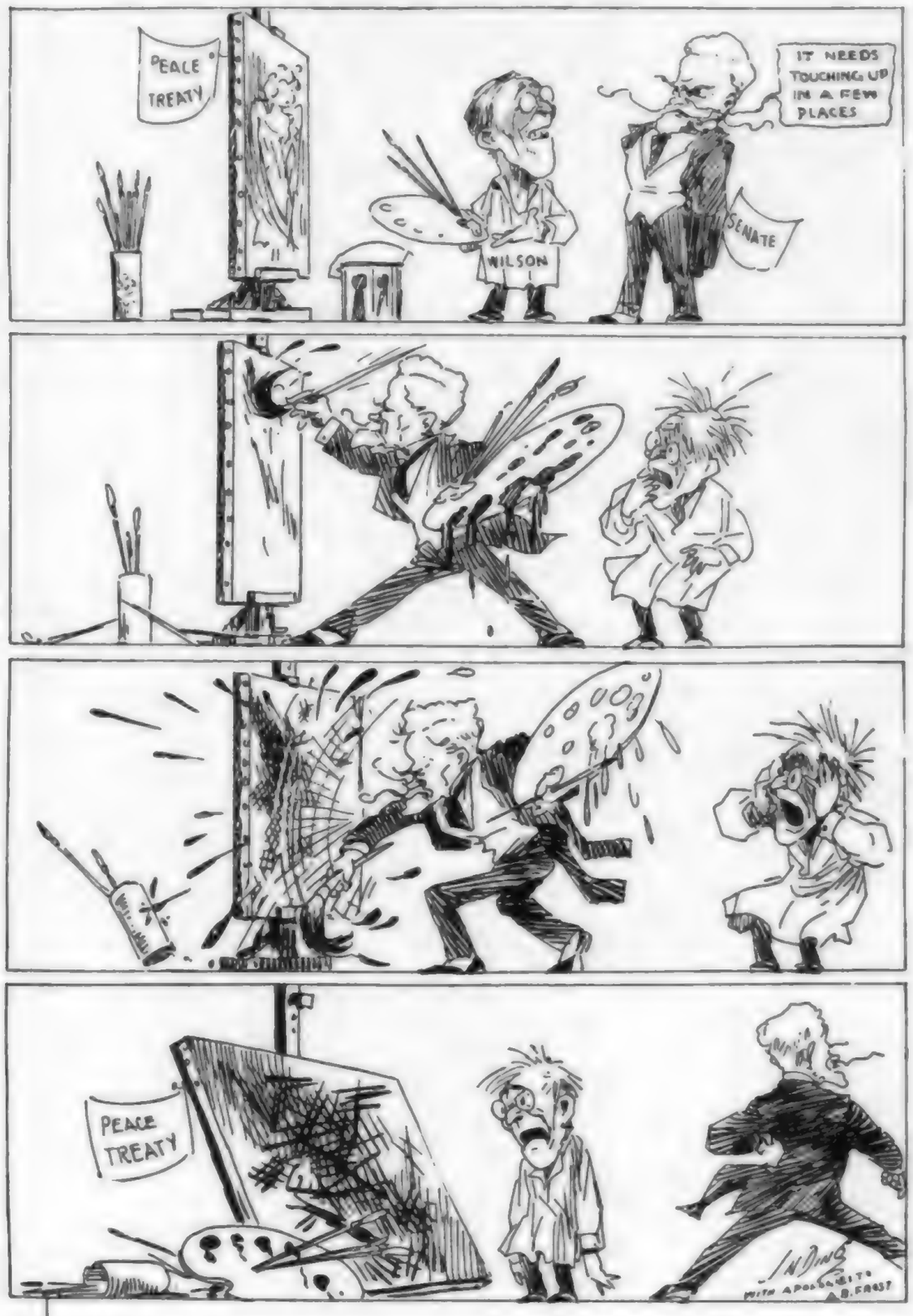
Will Some New Herod of National Ambition or Political Jealousy Destroy This One, Too? 25 December 1918

man of peace to a bedridden old man, a political pariah even within his own party. Oddly enough, during this same period, Ding's estimation of and support for the president soared. By the time Wilson died in 1924, Ding had come to regard him almost as a mythic figure. For all of his love for the ideals and policies of Theodore Roosevelt, Ding exhibited his first passion for a president's position in his support for Wilson and the League of Nations.

Ding had to find a reason for the war. He could not justify the killing fields in Europe, and the thousands of Americans in particular who had died there, if the nation immediately abandoned its better self and returned to the ruthless pursuit of money that had characterized the pre-war years. Wilson's vision of a league of nations in which the nations of the world could resolve their disputes through debate and arbitration spoke to Ding's need to impose purpose on the carnage.[15] He found a political justification for the league as well. War debts, boundary disputes and other problems in Europe cried out for a league. In one cartoon, he shows old Mrs. World surrounded by dozens of screaming, fighting children, some of whom look up in surprise at the efficient-looking, well-dressed woman, labeled "League of Nations," who has appeared at their door. Ding's comment: "The sooner we can engage a governess the better."[16]

While Ding was expressing a majority sentiment, there was a vocal minority, headed by several influential Republicans in Congress, who were steadfastly opposed to the notion of a league. They believed the league would compromise America's independence, and they attacked it by employing xenophobic and partisan appeals. Ding was fully conscious of the threat that they posed to Wilson's dream and he began hitting at them with frequency. Some of his cartoons ridiculed: To those Republicans who faulted Wilson for not including any leading Republicans in the peace delegation, Ding pictured

THE ART STUDENT'S MASTERPIECE AND THE PROFESSOR'S CRITICISM



[1920]

the houses of Congress as back-seat drivers hectoring Wilson with one directive after another. Ding suggests that this was "probably the reason he didn't want 'em along on the trip to Paris." Some of the cartoons cast opposition to the league in monumental terms. On Christmas Day, 1918, Ding juxtaposed the star of Bethlehem with a star representing a "League to Enforce Peace," and asked, "Will some new Herod of national ambition or political jealousy destroy this one, too?"[17]

Splits among the allies soon soured the proceedings in Paris and members of congress began talking about amendments. Ding characterized congressional objections as absurd, arguing that the covenant provided more than enough latitude to accommodate

TIRED OF GIVING? YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS TO BE TIRED

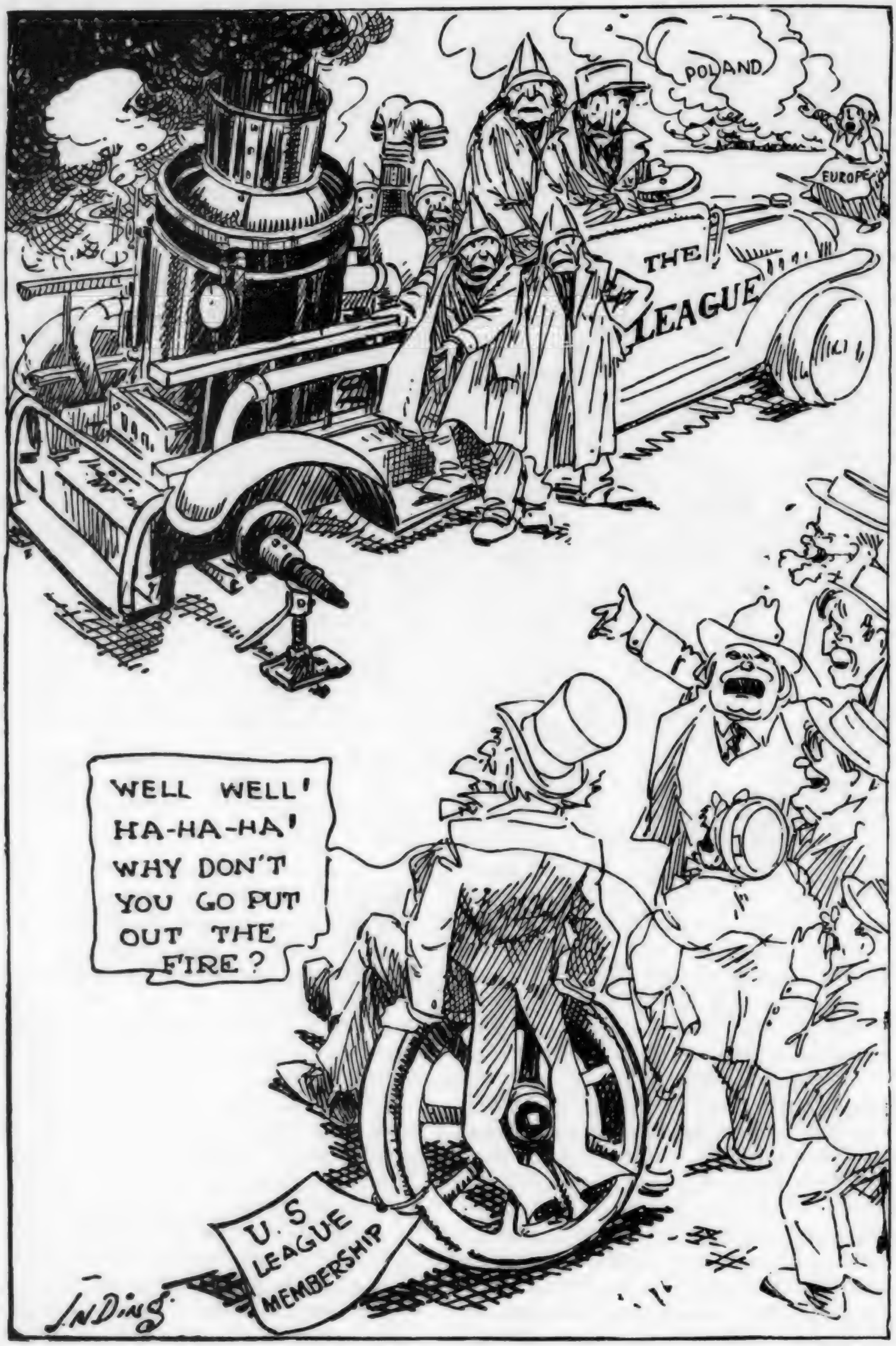
[1918]

any of our modest national interests. When the league was finally born in April, Ding celebrated the achievement by comparing it to the old hen in the barnyard who defies all skeptics and hatches a chick after all.[18]

When Wilson returned home in July, he received a hero's welcome. Ding characterized the event as "the end of another momentous chapter," but allowed that history would probably need "100 years or so" to pass a mature judgment on the proceedings. Still, that did not stop Ding from wading into the debate that ensued upon Wilson's return. He knew Wilson's league was in for trouble. Just after welcoming him home, he showed Wilson as a transatlantic traveller being stopped at customs for a baggage search. The agents are the leading league opponents and they make a big mess of all his luggage contents, much to his dismay.[19]

Republican leadership in Congress seemed intent on foiling what had become perceived as the president's peace treaty and Ding chalked up their balkiness to petty politics, plain and simple. Ding stood with the increasingly intransigent Wilson in

THERE! DIDN'T WE TELL YOU IT WOULDN'T WORK?



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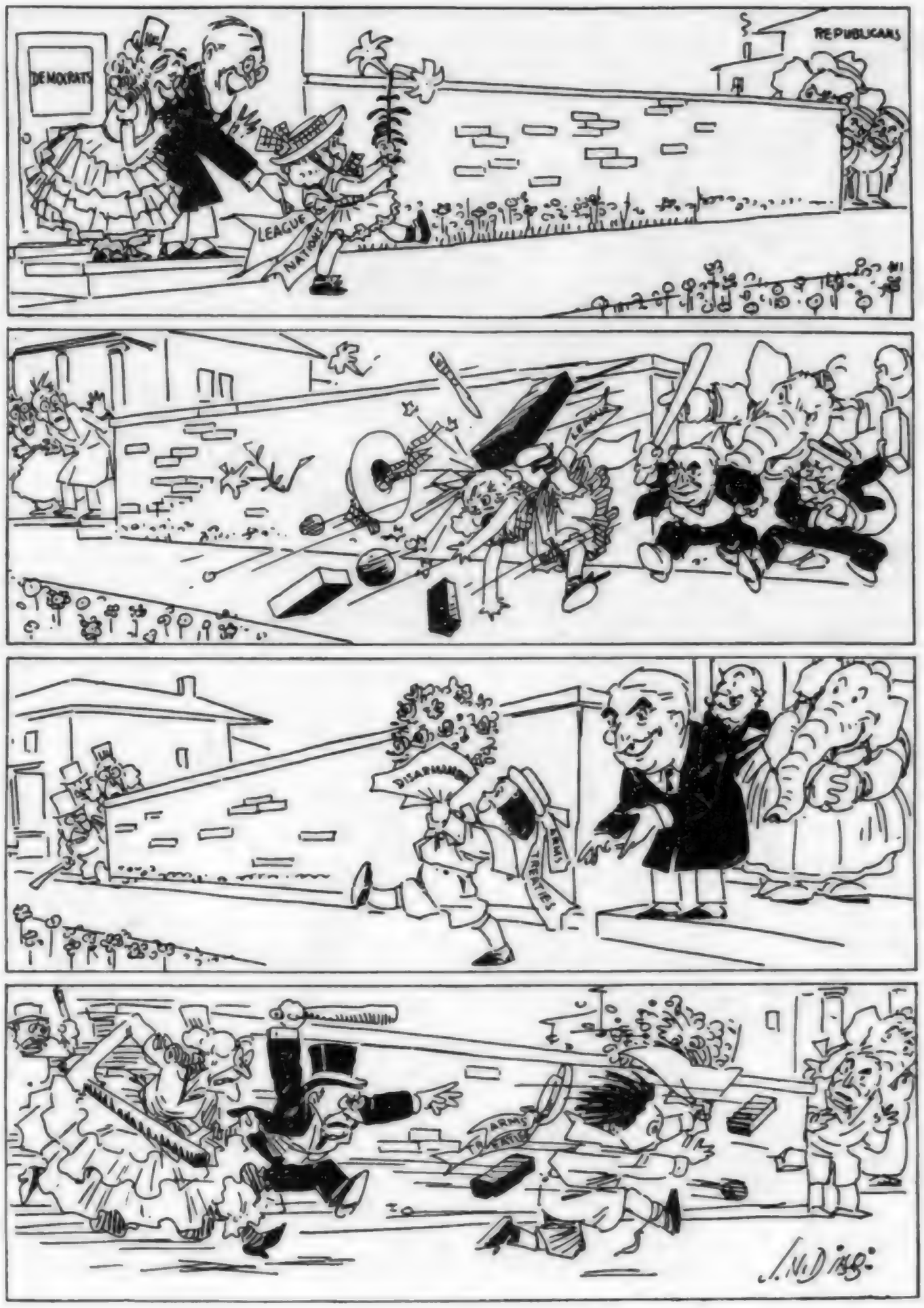


These Family Feuds May Be Great for Family Pride, But They're Kind of Tough on the Children. 10 March 1922

rejecting all attempts to qualify America's participation in the league, even those posed by moderate Republicans who were sincere supporters of the concept of a league for peace. Ding characterized the debate as one between extremists who wanted to kill the league and moderates who wanted to alter it. Neither path had Ding's support; he believed it was just fine as it stood. Ding outlined the debate in a two frame cartoon titled, "Removing the Adenoid to improve the breathing." In the top frame, he pictured a crazed Senator Borah from Idaho lining up the blade of his axe with the neck of a little girl in hair bow and petticoats, labeled "Peace Treaty." In the bottom frame, he showed the more moderate Republicans Taft, Hughes, Lodge, and Root as surgeons preparing to operate on the little girl. Ding's caption: "It is generally conceded that Doc Borah's method of removing the adenoid just below the necktie is probably unnecessarily severe. But that a slight operation by specialists would be both painless and beneficial." To this, Ding depicts Wilson explaining to the eager surgeons: "But the child hasn't any adenoids."[20]

In the summer of 1919, Senator Henry Cabot Lodge emerged as the leading opponent to the league. Ding considered him a pompous, self-righteous man (much as Lodge's supporters viewed Wilson) and he portrayed the Senator's imperiousness in a number of cartoons. In the clownishly sad, "The Art Student's Masterpiece and the Professor's Criti-

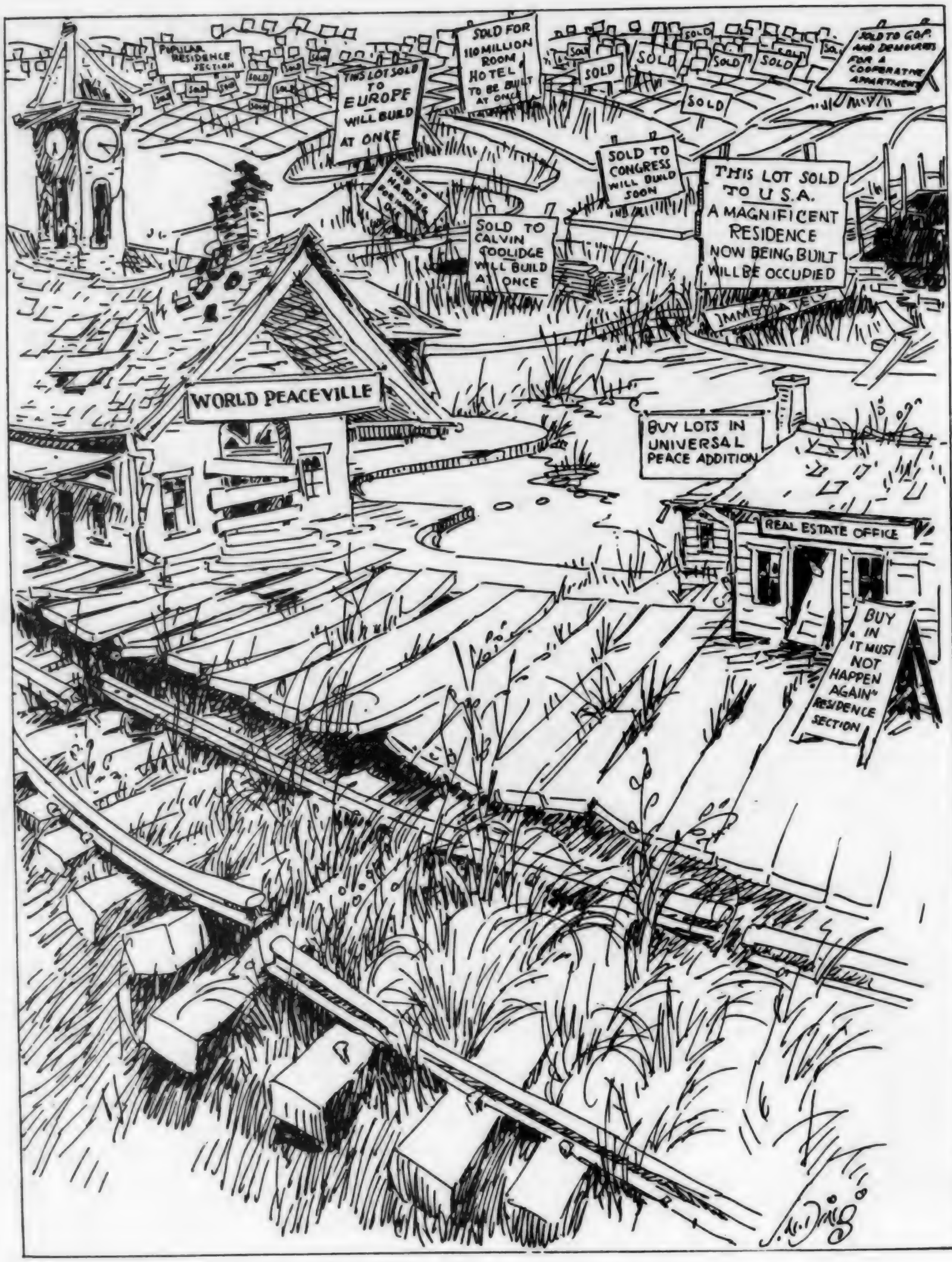
Millions of Boys to Fight but Not One Delegate for Prevention. 24 April 1923

cism," he showed Wilson presenting Lodge with his "Peace Treaty" painting of the Goddess of Peace. Lodge hurrumphs that it "needs touching up in a few places." So he relieves the president of his palette and brush and proceeds to ruin Wilson's masterpiece.[21]

By the end of the 1919 legislative session it became clear to all but the most starry-eyed that the U.S. was not going to enter the league. When civil strife broke out in Poland and the league responded feebly, American opponents of the league took this as an indication of inadequacy. Ding took umbrage with this logic. In "There! Didn't we tell you it wouldn't work?" he showed Europe beckoning to the league fire department to go douse the flames engulfing Poland. The league fire engine crew is ready to roll, except for one small detail: the fire engine is missing its right rear wheel, labeled "U.S. League Membership." Uncle Sam is passively watching the disaster unfold, using the wheel as a spectator's seat. Flanking Uncle Sam are league opponents Lodge, Borah, Hearst and others, who taunt the frustrated fire crew, "Ha-Ha-Ha! Why don't you go put out the fire?"[22]

Ding, like Wilson, hoped the 1920 presidential campaign would become a referendum on U.S. membership in the league. But the Republican candidate, Warren G. Harding, danced around the issue, advocating greater participation in the World Court, but not in the league. The Democratic candi-

And No Shepherd Has Since Come Forth To Take His Place. 6 February 1924


POPULAR RESIDENCE SECTION
THIS LOT SOLD TO EUROPE WILL BUILD AT ONCE
SOLD FOR 110 MILLION ROOM HOTEL TO BE BUILT AT ONCE
SOLD
SOLD TO CONGRESS WILL BUILD SOON
SOLD TO CALVIN COOLIDGE WILL BUILD AT ONCE
THIS LOT SOLD TO U.S.A. A MAGNIFICENT RESIDENCE NOW BEING BUILT WILL BE OCCUPIED IMMEDIATELY
SOLD TO GOP AND DEMOCRATS FOR A COOPERATIVE APARTMENT
WORLD PEACEVILLE
BUY LOTS IN UNIVERSAL PEACE ADDITION
REAL ESTATE OFFICE
BUY IN "IT MUST NOT HAPPEN AGAIN" RESIDENCE SECTION

The Deserted Village. 19 April 1926

date James M. Cox talked up league membership, but he seemed to do so without conviction. Harding was urging America to return to its isolationist roots and avoid foreign entanglements. Cox, in turn, tried to paint the Republicans as robber-baron elitists, awash in ill-gotten gains. Ding brought both candidates to task for sidestepping the league issue, and he seemed despondent when Harding won in a landslide.[23]

Despite the election results, Ding did not give up hopes for international peacekeeping efforts. In April 1921, league opponent William Borah began to promote the idea of a U.S.-U.K. naval disarmament conference. Somewhat unconventionally, he viewed international disarmament as a logical extension of his isolationist politics. With the War over, Ding reverted to his earlier position on weapons spending, arguing that it was a ridiculous waste of money. Ding drew Uncle Sam at a ticket window, considering his summer vacation options. One travel poster promotes "the Great Armament Race" at rates of "$3,000,000 a day and up!" The other extols the "International Disarmament Beach" as "quiet, inexpensive" and "$3 a day, room and board." As Uncle Sam ponders his options, the American taxpayer/porter struggles under the weight of Uncle Sam's luggage, labeled "War Taxes."[24]

After the Senate unanimously passed Borah's bill, President Harding upped the ante by calling the global powers to a disarmament conference to discuss all forms of disarmament. Ding reacted to the news with joy, depicting Harding as David stunning the Goliath of world armaments with his disarmament conference pebble.[25] When the conference convened in Washington in November, Secretary of State Hughes shocked the participants by proposing sweeping reductions in U.S., British, and Japanese navies, along with a ten-year construction "holiday." Ding traveled to Washington for the opening proceedings and was heartened by the mood there. As the conference continued its work at year's end, Ding was inclined to give the first nine months of the Harding administration high marks, especially for its disarmament work.[26]

The conference ended in February with much to show for its efforts. Conference participants adopted three treaties: the Hughes proposals (with modest alterations), a treaty outlawing poisonous gas and submarine warfare, and a treaty that legitimized the status quo in the Pacific, which had the effect of blocking further Japanese expansion for a decade. Ding was particularly supportive of the Pacific treaty, believing it effectively outlawed unrest in the Pacific for the near future. Congress was not so enthusiastic, particularly the isolationists, who were concerned about entangling alliances, and some of the Democrats, who were loath to accept the idea of a Republican administration success.[27]

Ding was growing tired of such partisan rancor; he said as much in a four-panel cartoon he drew in March. The cartoon sequence begins with Wilson and Miss Democracy proudly sending off their little girl, labeled "League of Nations," with spring lilies for the Republican neighbors next door. Instead of welcoming the child, the Republicans batter her with bricks and stones. Then the GOP leaders send forth their little boy, "Arms Treaties," with a bouquet of flowers for the Democrats, who, of course, respond with an assault of their own. Ding's comment: "These family feuds may be great for family pride but they're kind of tough on the children."[28] Eventually the treaties were ratified with lukewarm Democratic support and amendments that stated that they carried no obligation to defend other nations.

On the other front, U.S. participation in the league, not much had changed. Generally, the Harding administration ignored the league, though in 1922 it did begin sending "unofficial observers" to league conferences of interest, particularly those in the areas of health and social issues. Even though public support for some kind of involvement in international peace-keeping efforts remained high, most politicians and newspaper barons considered it a bad idea. Ding expressed his frustration with this line of thinking in his cartoon "Millions of Boys to Fight but Not One Delegate for Prevention." In the face of war, said Ding, the overweight stay-at-homes couldn't send off young doughboys to the fighting fast enough. The politician intones "We'll win if it takes every boy in America," and the editor chimes in "We should have ten million men over there right now." Ding commented bitterly, "With what generous idealism we gave the lives of the boys to the practical job of stopping bullets . . . . But what practical hard-headed businessmen we become when a small contribution of intelligent counsel is desired for the sake of prevention."[29]

Harding had made positive noises about membership in the World Court during the campaign, but had done nothing his first two years in office to make it happen. In 1923 Secretary of State Hughes finally put before Congress a bill for U.S. participation in the World Court, with four reservations involving financial obligations and prerogatives. Harding died in August 1923, before action was taken on the reservations. When Coolidge pressed for passage of the bill, Ding applauded. His cartoon shows Coolidge, the stationmaster of Isolationville, flagging down the World Court locomotive for passenger Uncle Sam. While Coolidge works, however, Lodge and his senate cronies use reservation nails to hammer Uncle

Sam's coattails and luggage to the platform floor. Ding, mixing his tenses, ambiguously captions the cartoon, "Begins to Look As If We Never Would Get Out of This Jerkwater Town." From this it is difficult to say if Ding believed the U.S. would finally escape "Isolationville," or if Uncle Sam would be stuck on that platform forever.[30]

In the end, however, it was Coolidge and not Congress that added one fatal reservation to the World Court membership proposal: that the U.S. not be bound by opinions rendered by the court without U.S. consent. Congress passed the bill, with all five reservations, but the other member nations of the court refused to accept Coolidge's fifth proviso, arguing that it cut to the very heart of the court's ability to enforce its decisions. Coolidge responded by saying the issue was not negotiable. His intransigence—and later world events—would forever make the matter of U.S. participation in the World Court and the league moot. Two years after his pro-Coolidge "Isolationville" cartoon, Ding drew another town, "World Peaceville," in which he abandoned all hope for progress towards peace. The World Peaceville railroad station is boarded up, the real estate office is closed and the landscape is dotted with signs announcing the good intentions of the U.S. and Europe who have purchased lots but will now never build on them.[31]

Ding's hero, Wilson, slipped out of the national spotlight in March 1921, but Ding did not forget him. When the ex-president died in February 1924, Ding drew not one but two memorial cartoons to the crusader for world peace: The first showed a stricken Wilson and a grieving Angel of Peace, driving away the spectres of Death, War, and Hatred. It was titled, "That Peace which in life was denied him." Two days later, he drew one of his most powerful cartoons. It featured a vignette of a shepherd's mountain-top cabin, in the midst of a lashing snowstorm. A black wreath hangs on the cabin door, and a staff, labeled "International Leadership," lies abandoned in the snow. Surrounding the vignette is a forbidding snowscape, crowded with bleating sheep, lost in the driving storm and sure to perish. In his caption, Ding lamented: "And no shepherd has since come forth to take his place."[32]

Ding would draw cartoons for another twenty-five years. He would live through another world war and applaud FDR's efforts to establish the United Nations, but he would never again feel as hopeful as he did in the heady days following World War I when a shepherd appeared in the guise of Woodrow Wilson intent on leading the world into an era of peace. ●

NOTES

1. *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 19 October 1909, 1.

2. "No More Blowups," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 15 August 1911, 1.

3. Reprinted in Jay N. Darling, *Condensed Ink* (Des Moines, IA: Des Moines Register and Leader, [1914]).

4. Reprinted in Darling, *Condensed Ink*.

5. "Under the Hay-cock Fast Asleep," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 2 June 1915, 1.

6. "Preparedness Invites War—Likewise Fire Escapes Invite Fire," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 15 October 1916, 1.

7. See "The Dreamer," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 23 March 1916, 1, and "An Interruption in the Shopping Expedition," *Des Moines Register and Leader*, 19 April 1916, 1.

8. "Making Sure They're Clean," and "There Was a Chicken in That Egg After All," reprinted in Darling, *Condensed Ink*.

9. August Heckscher, *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1991), 359-433.

10. Reprinted in Jay N. Darling, *In Peace and War* (Des Moines, IA: Des Moines Register, 1918).

11. Reprinted in Jay N. Darling, *Aces and Kings* (Des Moines, IA: Des Moines Register, 1918).

12. Reprinted in Darling, *Aces and Kings*.

13. Reprinted in Darling, *Aces and Kings*.

14. Reprinted in Darling, *Aces and Kings*.

15. *Des Moines Register*, 14 November 1918, 1.

16. *Des Moines Register*, 16 November 1918, 1.

17. *Des Moines Register*, 2 December 1918, 1; 25 December 1918, 1.

18. "A Big Hole in the Barn for the Big Cat and Then a Little Hole for the Little Cat," *Des Moines Register*, 4 March 1919, 1; "The Old Hen Seems to Have Hatched Something Out of the Doorknob After All," *Des Moines Register*, 16 April 1919, 1.

19. *Des Moines Register*, 12 July 1919, 1; 14 July 1919, 1.

20. *Des Moines Register*, 14 August 1919, 1.

21. Reprinted in Jay N. Darling, *The Jazz Era* (Des Moines, IA: Des Moines Register, 1920).

22. Reprinted in Darling, *The Jazz Era*.

23. "Delivering It to the Wrong Door," *Des Moines Register*, 10 September 1920, 1.

24. "Let's See Now, Where Should We Spend the Summer?" *Des Moines Register*, 23 April 1921, 1.

25. "David, Goliath, and the Little Pebble," *Des Moines Register*, 13 July 1921, 1.

26. "There's Plenty More Big Game in the Woods for Those Who Know How to Shoot," *Des Moines Register*, 16 December 1921, 1.

27. *Des Moines Register*, 23 January 1922, 1.

28. *Des Moines Register*, 10 March 1922, 1.

29. *Des Moines Register*, 24 April 1923, 1.

30. *Des Moines Register*, 30 May 1924, 1.

31. "The Deserted Village," *Des Moines Register*, 19 April 1926, 1.

32. *Des Moines Register*, 4 February 1924, 1; 6 February 1924, 1.

resources

The Swann Collection of Caricature and Cartoon at the Library of Congress

by Harry Katz and Sara Duke

This article is the second in a series describing cartoon-related research facilities. Further information about the holdings of the Library of Congress will be published in volume 1, issue 3.

Cartoon art has been a strength within the graphic art collections of the Library of Congress since 1870, when new federal copyright legislation gave the institution custody of all items registered to date, and into the future. Works deposited for copyright registration have given the Library unparalleled coverage of American graphic humor from the nineteenth century. Early cartoon copyright deposits include engraved and lithographed social and political satires, trade cards, and advertising labels.

In 1897, to accommodate growing collections and the wealth of material arriving through copyright registration, Congress opened a new Library building and established the Division of Prints (now the Division of Prints and Photographs) to take custody of works on paper. Since then the cartoon collections have continued to expand not only through copyright registration, but also through an active, focused acquisition program. In 1920 the Library acquired almost ten thousand British, French, Dutch, and German satires from the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. During the 1930s and 1940s, with the assistance of former *Harper's Magazine* art editor William Patten, the Library created the Cabinet of American Illustration, a collection of almost four thousand original drawings from the golden age of American illustration, 1870-1920. The Cabinet includes works by masters of American satiric and comic art, including Thomas Nast, H.L. Stephens, Edward Kemble, and A. B. Frost. Additionally, the Library's collections of editorial cartoon drawings have benefitted from numerous gifts by generations of distinguished American cartoonists including Clifford Berryman, Daniel Fitzpatrick, Rollin Kirby, John Fischetti, Edwin Marcus, and Bill Mauldin. The past twenty years, however, have seen an even greater growth in the Library's collections of original cartoon art, stimulated in large part by the gift in the 1970s of the Swann Collection of Caricature and Cartoon, and the accompanying endowment fund established to preserve, exhibit, publish, and develop the collection and related Library collections.

New York advertising executive Erwin Swann (1906-1973) spent a lifetime assembling his extraordinarily diverse collection of political prints and drawings, caricatures, cartoon strips and panels, and magazine illustrations. He conceived and assembled the collection specifically to promote the preservation and connoisseurship of original cartoon and illustration drawings. It contains works by four hundred artists from a dozen countries, spanning two centuries. The Swann Collection came to the Library of Congress in 1974, with a fund to maintain, preserve, and develop the collection, and under an agreement whereby a space would be provided for the permanent exhibition of works from the collection and related Library holdings.

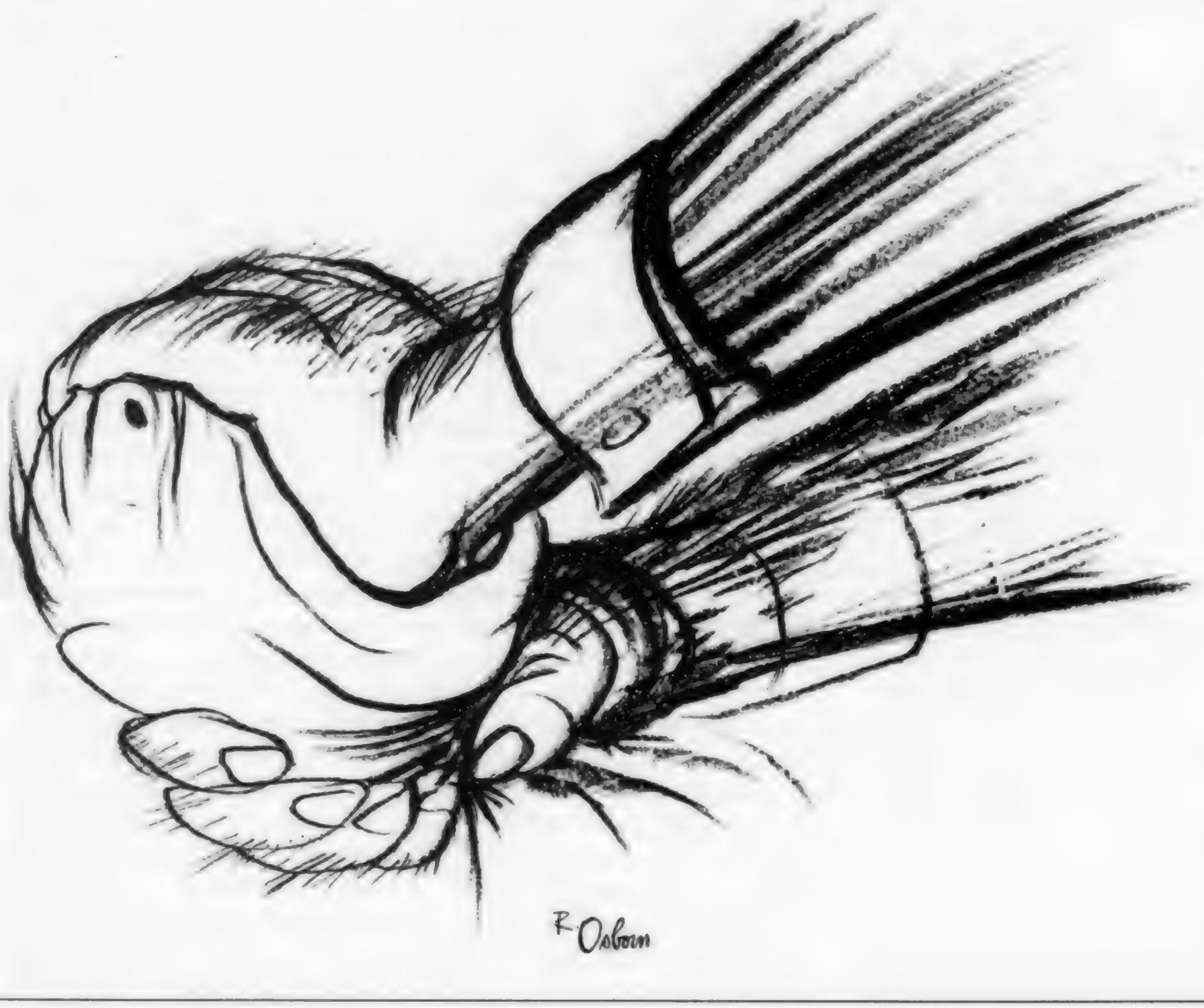
Erwin Swann believed that original caricatures and cartoons

should be studied within the same context as fine art drawings, and along with cartoon art his collection included European master prints and drawings, including works by Bonnard, Degas, Henry Moore, and Picasso. Drawings by European artists such as Camille Pissarro, Guillaume Chevalier Gavarni, Constantin Guys, John Leech, and Richard Doyle in fact blur the line between fine and popular art. The true glory of the collection resides, however, in the rich diversity of twentieth-century American and European cartoon drawings.

American cartoonists and illustrators of the 1920s and 1930s are particularly well represented through works by John Held, Jr., Ralph Barton, Rea Irvin, Anne Harriet Fish, Russell Patterson, and Peggy Bacon. The collection includes a fine group of watercolor and gouache covers for *Vanity Fair*, and cartoon drawings for *The New Yorker* by Peter Arno, Whitney Darrow, and others. The Swann Collection also presents a distinguished selection of early twentieth-century political and social caricatures, including works by Homer Davenport, Luther Bradley, Max Beerbohm, Oliver Herford, and Miguel Covarrubias. From the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s Swann collected works by contemporary American and European cartoonists and illustrators, including Robert Osborn, Edward Sorel, Anita Siegel, David Levine, Jean-Claude Suarez, Jose Luis Cuevas, Jean-Michel Folon, Andre Francois, and Eugene Mihaesco. The crude power of Latin American popular caricature is dramatically represented in the large body of material attributed to Mexican printmaker Jose Guadalupe Posada and issued by his publisher Vanegas Arroyo, which includes the largest surviving group of Posada printing blocks.

In addition to these political and social caricatures and cartoons, the Swann Collection amply

"If You Differ with Me We will Silence You"
Robert Osborn (b. 1904)
Charcoal with black ink on white paper
1954
Swann Collection of Caricature and Cartoon



records the early history of the American newspaper cartoon strip. Works by R.F. Outcault, Frederick Opper, Winsor McCay, George McManus, George Herriman, and others document the early growth of the genre. Its further development may be traced through drawings by pioneering women cartoonists such as Grace Drayton and Virginia Huget, and by later comic art legends including Hal Foster, Chester Gould, Milton Caniff, Burne Hogarth, and Dale Messick.

In 1968, seeking to harness the scholarly and popular potential of his collection, Erwin Swann created the Swann Foundation, a non-profit tax-exempt institution guided by an advisory board composed of prominent art historians, curators, and cartoonists. Over the next few years, the Foundation sponsored several scholarly exhibitions, including a 1970 Whitney Museum exhibition of Thomas Nast's *Caricaturama*, a monumental series of painted satires attacking Andrew Johnson; and the foundation lent generously to other exhibitions, such as *The Art of the Comic Strip*, a 1971 exhibition and catalog prepared by Judith O'Sullivan for the University of Maryland at College Park. Since then, the New York-based Swann Foundation has continued to fund scholarly exhibitions, publications, artist's awards, and research grants related to the art of caricature and cartoons. More recently, the Library of Congress and the Swann Collection have served as the primary sources for a number of seminal surveys and exhibitions on caricatures and cartoons. Ron Tyler's bicentennial exhibition and catalog titled *The Image of America in Caricature & Cartoon* drew heavily from the collection, as did Judith O'Sullivan's recent publication titled *The Great American Comic Strip*.

Building on these past efforts, a multi-year cataloging, publication, and exhibition effort is currently underway at the Library to further public awareness of the collection and promote the value of caricatures and cartoons as social documents and works of art. A comprehensive catalog and finding aid for the entire Swann Collection, now in the final stages of completion, will be available to researchers in the Prints and Photographs Division reading room as of January 1995. For the spring of that year, the Library is also preparing an exhibition and illustrated catalog celebrating the centennial of the Yellow Kid and the birth of the American cartoon strip. The exhibition, titled *Featuring the Funnies: Cartoon Art at the Library of Congress*, will feature drawings selected from the Swann Collection and the recently acquired George Sturman Collection, as well as from smaller cartoon archives given by the artists themselves, including Walt Kelly and Garry B. Trudeau. Furthermore, the Library is considering a major exhibition and illustrated publication on the history of American political drawings to mark the election year of 1996.

As noted above, the Swann Collection was given to the Library with an endowment fund for its support, and with the understanding that exhibition space would be made available in perpetuity for the display of works from the collection and related cartoon holdings. To fulfill this requirement, the Library has provided a gallery for that purpose on the sixth floor of the Madison Building. Known as the Oval Gallery, and currently dedicated to Caroline and Erwin Swann Memorial Exhibitions, this venue has witnessed a distinguished series of semi-annual exhibitions examining eighteenth-century English caricatures, Civil War satires, drawings by Iranian cartoonist Ardeshir Mohasses, and politically-oriented cartoon strips from *Pogo* and *Doonesbury*, among others. One recent exhibition titled *Party Animals: A Political Primer* documented the history of animals as American political party symbols, and is now touring a group of four Presidential libraries. In conjunction with the 1993 Oval Gallery exhibition, *Mental Pictures by Henrik Drescher*, the Library published a booklet designed by this talented young artist and author, who challenges our traditional notions of illustration art. Upcoming Oval Gallery exhibitions for 1994 will include a provocative comparison of photographic portraits by Carl Van Vechten and caricatures by Miguel Covarrubias, titled *About Face*, and *Savage Glee: Cartoons from Judge, Puck, and Life*.

Along with these exhibitions and publications, the Caroline and Erwin Swann Memorial Fund for Caricature and Cartoon also provides for the further development of the Library's cartoon collections through a program of selective acquisition. Recent acquisitions made possible by support from the Swann Fund include the George Sturman Collection of cartoon drawings; illustrations by Clare Leighton for *Folks Do Get Born*, a memoir of life among African American midwives in rural Georgia which was published in 1946; illustrations from *The Forum* magazine, 1925-32; and political drawings by John Sloan, Hugo Gellert, Grace Clements, Robert Minor, Boardman Robinson, Charles White, and Edward Sorel. Through this carefully considered program of acquisitions, exhibitions, and publications, the Swann Collection continues to be a focal point for scholarly interest in cartoon art, and the Library of Congress perpetuates the memory and vision of Erwin and Caroline Swann. ●

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emanata

Mort Walker in his ***Lexicon of Comicana*** *invented the term "emanata" to describe the graphic devices used by cartoonists to describe "what is going on inside" their characters. This occasional feature of INKS is intended to provide an opportunity for commentary, anecdotes of interest and historical sketches. Readers interested in writing such a feature are invited to contact the editor.*

Self portrait by the artist from *F. Fox's Funny Folk.*

A Legacy of Sir John Leech

by Malcolm Whyte

"Want to see something interesting?" John Coulthard asked. Wiping his broad hands across the even broader girth of his smock front, he plucked a book from a shelf in a roomful of overflowing bookshelves and handed me a hefty jacketless volume titled *F. Fox's Funny Folk*, a collection of Fontaine Fox's cartoons from 1917.[1] I recognized some of the characters cavorting on the cover in tones of deep red and blue: the Powerful Katrinka, Terrible Tempered Mr. Bang, and of course, the Skipper commanding the renowned Toonerville Trolley.

I loved Fox's cartoons with their energetic, sketchy style, the rickety-rackety trolley and the wonderfully wacky folks who lived along its tracks and depended on it for transportation, communication and pride. It proved that they, as plain and complex as they were, lived in a modern world.

Coulthard (pronounced "cole-thard") pointed an ink-stained forefinger at the front of the book and said, "Here, look here," as he pushed the cream-colored pages back from the inside front cover. There in dark blue ink the signature canted across the page, the top strokes of its Fs dramatically arching over each part of the name: Fontaine Fox.

"Wow!" I said. "Where did you get this?"

Researching material for a book on cartoons, I had visited John Coulthard at his studio in an old, four-story San Francisco office building at 143 Second Street several times. At first meeting, John was very intimidating. Rising a burly six-foot-one with steely gray hair, he spoke tersely as he

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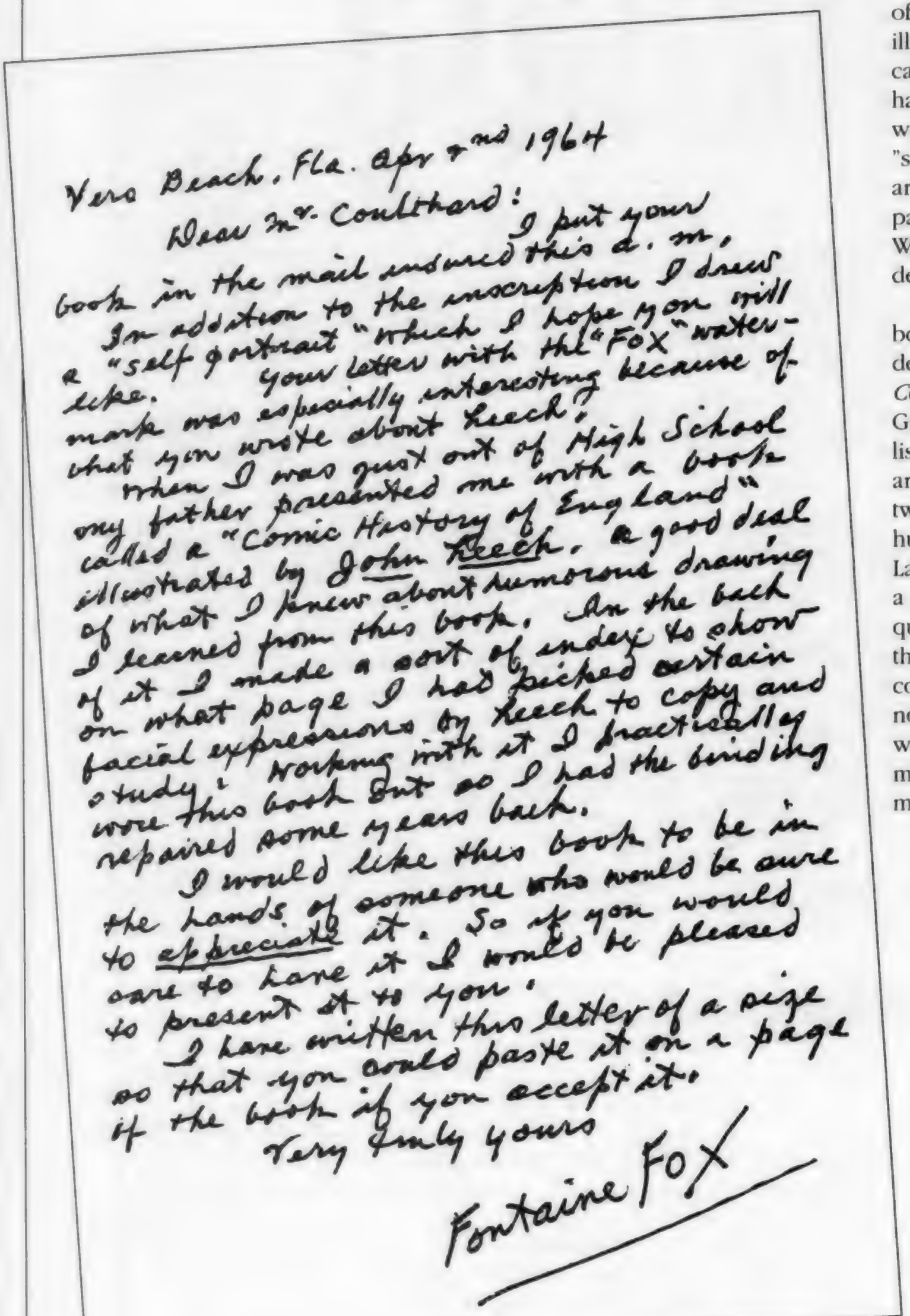
"The Legacy of Sir John Leech" by M. K. Whyte is printed by permission. Copyright 1993 by M. K. Whyte. All rights reserved.

frowned through thick, plastic-framed glasses. Once his appraisal of you assayed genuine common interests with his, however, his dour facade melted with enthusiasm. He loved to share his eclectic knowledge of art and anecdotes about his collection.



Vero Beach. Fla. Apr 2nd 1964

Dear Mr. Coulthard:

I put your book in the mail insured this a. m. In addition to the inscription I drew a "self portrait" which I hope you will like. Your letter with the "FOX" watermark was especially interesting because of what you wrote about Leech. When I was just out of High School my father presented me with a book called a "Comic History of England" illustrated by John Leech. A good deal of what I know about humorous drawing I learned from this book. On the back of it I made a sort of index to show on what page I had picked certain facial expressions by Leech to copy and study. Working with it I practically wore this book out so I had the binding repaired some years back.

I would like this book to be in the hands of someone who would be sure to appreciate it. So if you would care to have it I would be pleased to present it to you.

I have written this letter of a size so that you could paste it on a page if the book if you accept it.

Very truly yours

Fontaine Fox

Fontaine Fox's letter to John Coulthard stating Fox's wish to keep the book in the cartooning family.

He was a voracious collector. Just looking around his crammed, high-ceilinged room confirmed that. Anything to do with graphics and cartooning, John had it: stacks of magazines, bound volumes of illustrated periodicals, original cartoon art piled on table tops or hanging chock-a-block on precious wall space, files full of reference—"scrap"—material, even a startling array of Oceanic art such as carved paddles, masks, spears and shields. What he showed me next was a delightful surprise.

John placed in my hands a book from which Fontaine Fox developed his cartooning, *The Comic History of England* by Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett. Published in 1847 by Bradbury, Evans and Co. of London, it boasted twenty colored etchings and two hundred woodcuts by John Leech. Laid into the inside front cover was a letter from Fox that answered my question of where Coulthard got the autographed Toonerville collection, and a lot more. John's normally gruff countenance began weakening. His short, brush mustache twisted up into the merest smile as I read the letter.

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Dear Mr. Coulthard:

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In addition to the inscription I drew a "self portrait" which I hope you will like. Your letter with the "Fox" watermark was especially interesting because of what you wrote about Leech!

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I have written this letter of a size so that you would paste it on a page of the book if you accept it.

Very truly yours,
Fontaine Fox

The handsome title page (opposite a hand-colored, frenzied battle scene engraving titled "Landing by Julius Caesar") was inscribed by F. T. Fox, Jr. Below the signature, a statement fading in pencil announced: "presented to his son on Sunday, Feb 21st, 1904."

John explained that in one of his many raids on used book stores he came across the *Funny Folk* book and had obtained Fox's address to send the book to him for autographing. In his cover letter John told Fox about his own cartooning career, his interest in collecting cartoons and about his vast library of cartoon and other graphic art books. Fox, born in 1884, was eighty years old at the time, and no doubt glad to be able to pass such a treasure on to a knowledgeable collector and fellow cartoonist such as Coulthard. Making his letter of a size that would fit into the proffered book demonstrated Fox's understanding of collector habits.

John Thompson Coulthard was born in 1903 in Palo Alto and grew up in Modesto, the agricultural center of California's central valley. His artistic abilities surfaced early, and in the 1920s his cartoons

SAY - YOU ARE A REAL ARTIST— I'LL JUST GO IN AND FIRE OUR PRESENT CARTOONIST AND GIVE YOU HIS PLACE
EDITOR
A NIGHTMARE
COULTHARD

The realities of a cartoonist's job security. Cartoon by Coulthard for *Art and Life Magazine*, 1924.

appeared in art and campus humor magazines, including the University of Southern California's *Wampus*. John's advice-to-cartoonists articles and illustrations shared pages in *Art & Life* with such seasoned professional cartoonists as Eugene Zimmerman (Zim) and Nate Collier.

Coulthard moved to San Francisco in 1941 where, after a short stint as a shipyard timekeeper during World War II, he maintained a career as a freelance commercial artist and professional cartoonist. He was a loner, a hard-boiled, old-school Republican who exclaimed that he "wore no man's collar, by God!" John remained single and lived frugally all his life, which allowed him to indulge in two of his other talents: writing bawdy limericks and collecting.

His limerick prowess exceeded 50,000 verses, several thousand published anonymously in twenty-plus volumes of *Sex To Sexty* magazine in the fifties and sixties. Most of his lusty poems went unpublished, although John rated notice in Gershon Legman's book *The Limerick* which states that he "had written the largest number of limericks ever produced by one person, thus barely getting in ahead of the IBM machine."[2]

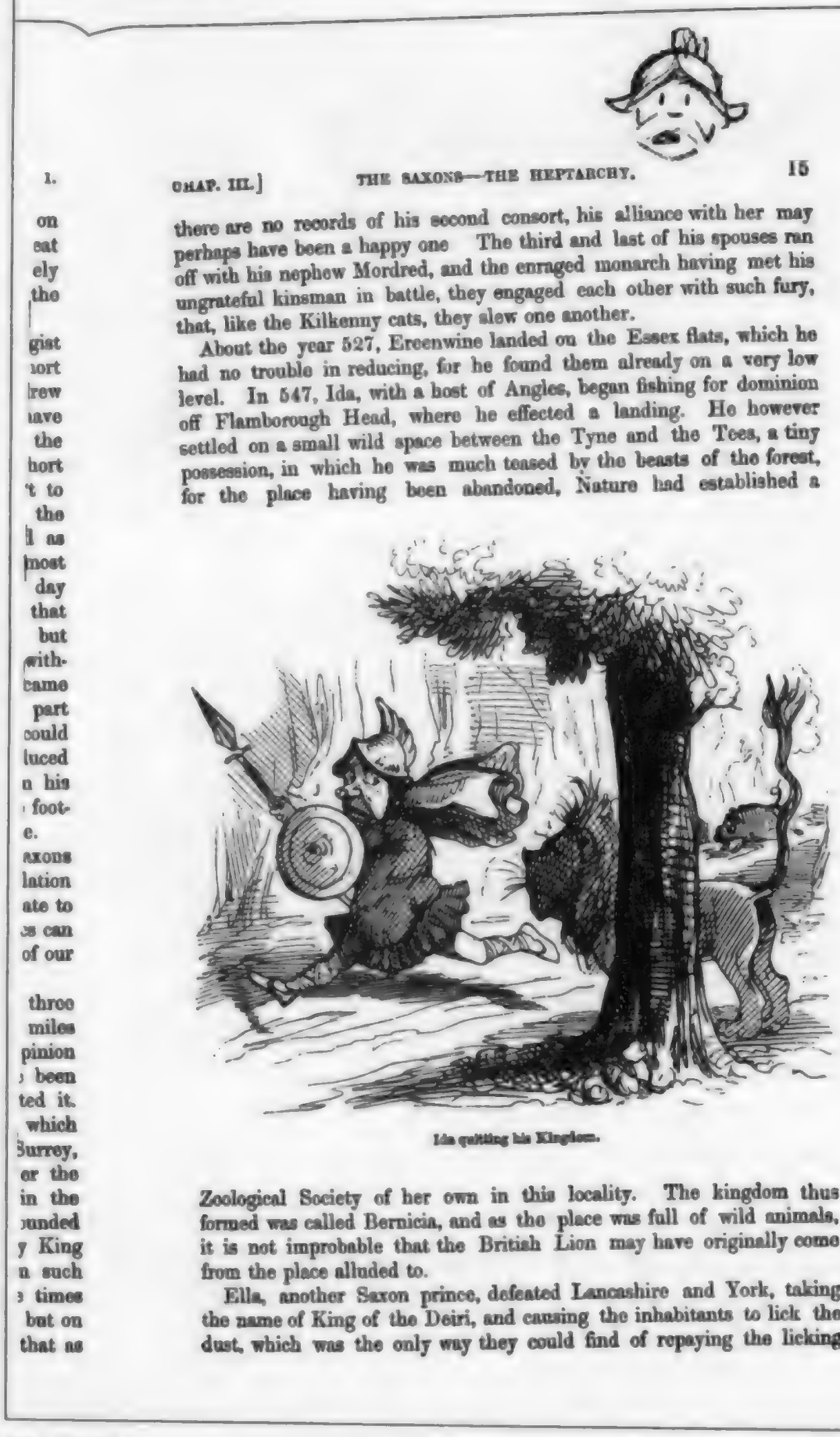
Coulthard collected many

things, from antique typewriters to Maori maces, but his greatest passions were books and cartoon art. He assiduously traded art with other cartoonists and collectors. After a meager meal alone at Foster's cafeteria, John would lumber over to one of San Francisco's many used book stores to graze among the bargains. Years of practice had sharpened his eyes. Thousands of rare and excellent books sagged his studio shelves. Books lurked behind books: eighteenth and nineteenth century first editions; illustrated "elephant folios;" books on typography, layout and design; hundreds of children's illustrated books; hundreds more cartoon anthologies among them. His most valuable tome, made only a little less so because it lacked the first few pages, was an edition of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*. Often Coulthard's books were inscribed by the authors or bore special drawings on the flyleaves by the artists. They hid other prizes, as well, such as a canceled check from Thomas Nast nestled in Nast's biography by Albert Bigelow Paine, or the special letter in the *Comic History of England*.

"And see here!" John wheezed. His fingers trembled a bit as he riffled to a page where a small face, drawn in pencil, appeared in the margin. In just a few deft strokes Fox had captured the essence of Leech's illustration below. Penciled in the end sheets I found Fox's glossary of expressions. Each line described an emotion and the page, or pages (*The Comic History of England* comprised two volumes in one, each with its own pagination), on which the expression appeared. The listing was alphabetized: from apprehension, 32-303; bewilderment, 50°; chagrin, 5; consternation, 39-13-198-85° to vexation 21°. The ° indicated a page from the second volume. Taped to the page opposite the glossary was a note from Fox stating, "I made this index when I was a teenager in high school. My father happened to notice I was working with the book, saw the index and then presented the book to me."

Turning to the indexed pages I could see how Leech's expressive illustrations attracted Fox and influenced his style. Compact as they were in the woodcut vignettes, Leech's illustrations shone with comic genius. Beneath sly caricature, anachronistic sight gags and slapstick antics, lay solid figure drawing. "Bit players" in the background or on the sidelines comment wryly on the main action, often in a setting roiling with steam, curling smoke, swirling dust, and churning seas or skies. Now and then the comedy was heightened by the sober contrast of exquisitely rendered architecture, finely detailed interiors or atmospheric landscapes. These skillful touches also let the viewer know that the artist knew his stuff. Sheepishly, I had to admit that I

Pencil impression by Fox of Leech's art in A. A'Beckett's *Comic History of England*.



1. CHAP. III.] THE SAXONS—THE HEPTARCHY. 15

there are no records of his second consort, his alliance with her may perhaps have been a happy one The third and last of his spouses ran off with his nephew Mordred, and the enraged monarch having met his ungrateful kinsman in battle, they engaged each other with such fury, that, like the Kilkenny cats, they slew one another.

About the year 527, Ercenwine landed on the Essex flats, which he had no trouble in reducing, for he found them already on a very low level. In 547, Ida, with a host of Angles, began fishing for dominion off Flamborough Head, where he effected a landing. He however settled on a small wild space between the Tyne and the Tees, a tiny possession, in which he was much teased by the beasts of the forest, for the place having been abandoned, Nature had established a

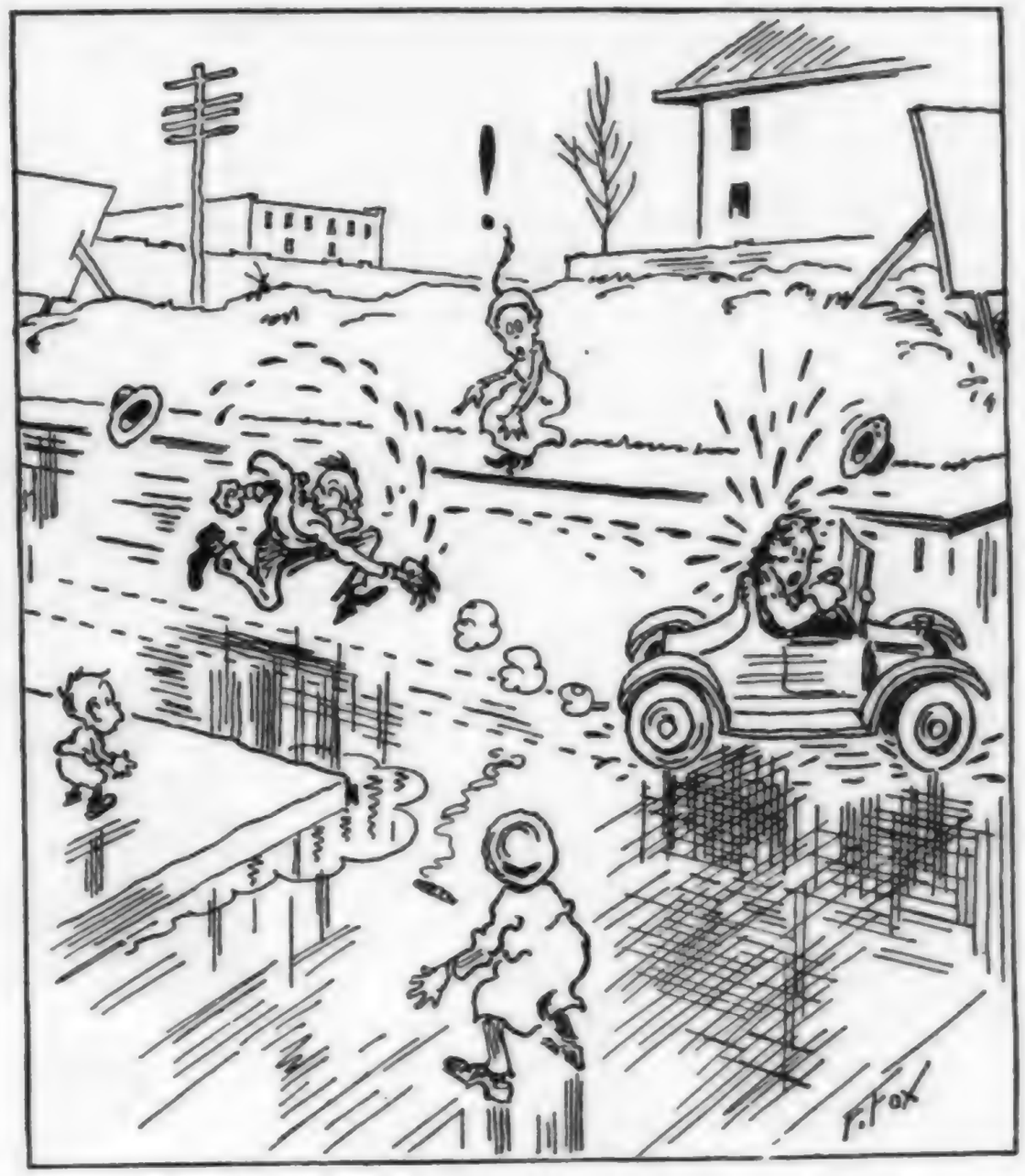
Ida quitting his Kingdom.

Zoological Society of her own in this locality. The kingdom thus formed was called Bernicia, and as the place was full of wild animals, it is not improbable that the British Lion may have originally come from the place alluded to.

Ella, another Saxon prince, defeated Lancashire and York, taking the name of King of the Deiri, and causing the inhabitants to lick the dust, which was the only way they could find of repaying the licking

John in a Passion.

Fox selected this Leech cut as portraying "rage." One wonders how much Leech's work inspired renderings of Fox's characters like "The Terrible Tempered Mr. Bang" shown here.



The Unfortunate Motorist Who Splashed Mud on the Terrible Tempered Mr. Bang.

133

to make fire-wood of the timbers of Brightric, which fortune had so cruelly shivered.

Ethelred was completely panic-stricken at the news of this reverse, and hurried home as fast as he could to summon a council, but every resolution that was passed no one had the resolution to execute. To add to the king's embarrassments, "Thurkill's host" came over, comprising the flower of the Scandinavian youth, which planted itself in Kent, and caused a sad blow to the country. Various short peaces were purchased by the Saxons at so much a piece; but, as Pope Gregory would have had it, every arrangement was not a sale, but a sell on the part of Thurkill, who continued sending in a fresh account for every

Thurkill's little Account.

transaction. Ethelred was now in the very midst of traitors, and ... could ever be brought round in such a circle. ... could be safely en-

Leech's illustration indexed by Fox as representing "consternation." Note the circle pencilled around middle figure's face. Fox also cross-referenced page 133 for another example of "consternation."

Flight of Rookwood

Dust flying, fowl fleeing and by-standers stunned by the action: only the mode of transportation changed much from Leech's time to Fox's.

knew nothing of Leech.

Pushing back a jumble of books, John sat against a table edge, crossed his thick arms and patiently explained that Leech was a consummate artist: a major figure in the pantheon of eighteenth and nineteenth century English humorous illustrators that included Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), James Gillray (1757-1825), and Leech's contemporary, George Cruikshank (1792-1878), who laid the foundation for American cartoon art. Leech's vigorous illustrations enjoyed publication in *Punch* from the London humor magazine's first year, 1841, until his death in 1864. As he talked, John pointed out original drawings or signed prints of the artists hanging around the room.

Leafing again through *Funny Folk* I could see Fontaine Fox went several levels beyond Leech in the activity department. Fox's cartoons explode with energy. The characters thrash about, bellow, weave and wave, generating speed lines, sparks, dust clouds, giant question marks and exclamation points that burst through his drawings like firecrackers on the Fourth of July. Skewed angles and extreme points of view—bird's eye and worm's eye views especially—accentuate the agitated movement of his panels and create a complementary environment for his recurring cast of eccentric, yet lovable, Toonerville folks. Readers fondly identified many of these quirky personalities in their own lives.

As I closed the cartoon book, John pushed off from the table, bent down at a lower shelf and, with a little puff, brought up three large albums. Each bound several dozen thick, gilt-edged pages. Gold stamping on one read: *Original Pencillings by John Leech.*

"Have a look," John coaxed, and wandered back to his ink spotted drawing board. "Take your time."

I unfastened the brass latch on the book and carefully lifted back the worn green leather cover. A small, crisp photograph dominated

the first page. "Yours Faithfully, John Leech" was inscribed below the picture. The handsome, middle-aged artist stood erect, yet comfortably, against a carved bookcase, one leg casually crossed the other at the ankle. His finely woven suit coat was buttoned only at the top exposing a matching vest, ornate watch chain and, at the neck, a dapper silk tie. Well-trimmed mutton chop sideburns outlined his strong chin. His high forehead rose over a noble brow, under which intelligent, deep-set eyes gazed bemusedly to one side. This was the man whose influence had stretched across continents and generations.

The rest of the album held beautifully matted original pencil drawings by Leech. Sizes ran about four by five inches, some much smaller, but all were executed masterfully. These were not the reproduced wood engravings I had seen in the *Comic History*. These were fluid, delicate sketches done by a strong, confident hand. The line was not only finer, but much more alive than in the woodcuts. I could feel the artist's hand at work as pressure on his pencil expressed a thick-and-thin line that charged the composition with dimension and life. The smallest jots animated the faces. Long graceful strokes carved volume out of the tiny pictures, giving his figures solidity and force. Leech's animal forms were especially stunning. His drawings of horses, in particular, showed great power and complete understanding of the animal's anatomy in just a few well-placed lines. These pencil sketches were absolute gems, and I told John so.

"What a treasure, John. And what a collection of books! Original Leech drawings, his *Comic History* as Fontaine Fox's drawing "bible," and an inscribed anthology of Fox's cartoons. From Leech to Fox to Coulthard . . . a cartooning triple play!"

John grinned with satisfaction as I put the albums back in the shelf. "Well, I hope you learned something," he growled good naturedly from his drawing board.

We said good-bye to each other. Stepping into the hall I turned to close John's studio door and saw him pick up a brush, bend low over his artwork and disappear behind his massive collection.

John Coulthard died 3 September 1964, a few months after our last visit. His collections, broken into several categories, were auctioned through his estate attorney and I successfully bid on John's book collection of 7,000 volumes. I kept about 1,500 books and sold the rest to the University of California library at Santa Barbara. Of the books I retained—cartoon books, children's literature and some reference books—the most prized are a cartoon trilogy: Fontaine Fox's *Funny Folk*, Fox's annotated copy of *The Comic History of England* and one green leather-covered album of original pencilings by Sir John Leech. ●

NOTES

1. Fontaine Fox, *F. Fox's Funny Folk* (New York: George H. Doran, 1917).

2. Gershon Legman, *The Limerick* (New York: Brandywine Press, 1970), lxix-lxx.

book reviews

Adult Comics: An Introduction

by Roger Sabin

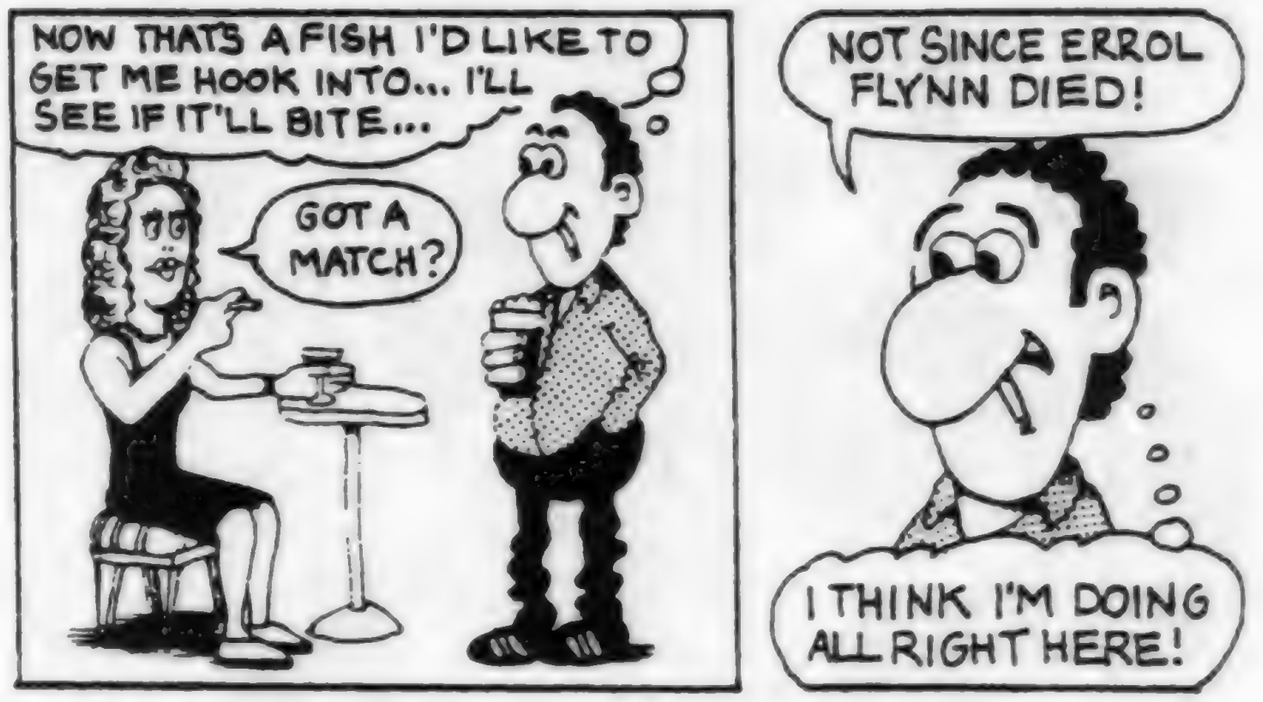
Reviewed by Frank Stack

I picked up Roger Sabin's *Adult Comics* with some feeling of anticipation that this effort might be the long-awaited intelligent appraisal of the whole class of serious work by artists and writers who do not seem to fit into any respectable art or literary category. This study is by the London arts journalist Roger Sabin, and it is an intelligent appraisal, more or less, without managing to enlighten us very much about the subject. The author tells us in his introduction that he approaches the subject from a British perspective and that he, with scholarly caution, limited his study to a broad overview of "comic books" intended for an audience over the age of sixteen. There is no attempt to deal with newspaper comic strips, except as background for the comic book. The text is presented in three parts, the first two sections dealing with a historic overview of the development of comic books first in Britain and then in the United States. The last section includes chapters on "Worldcomics," "Adult Comics and Other Media," women (in comics), and "The Graphic Novel."

Adult Comics proceeds rather predictably, laboring over history, background and definitions of terms, dutifully dealing with everything the author has ever heard of that seems to fit the definition of comics drawn by and intended for adults. For an American reader this book seems awfully, how shall I put it, pedantic? stuffy? patronizing? English! I was puzzled to find a chapter on underground comics in the section titled "Britain." Since I had not been aware that there was a significant underground comics movement in Britain, I turned immediately to that chapter. Of course it was not about British comics. Sabin notes that, "in Britain, the comix were very much an import." The chapter is about the American underground (*Zap*, Rip-Off Press, *Berkeley Barb*, etc.) and its subsequent influence in England, stimulating a small imitative response in the U.K. The "underground press" did not really take hold until the appearance of *Viz* in the 1980s. The best part of the book is the chapter Sabin devotes to this wonderfully funny satiric publication, which, in recent years, has been the best-selling of all "adult comics," even without the U.S. market. Curiously, Sabin never mentions *The National Lampoon*.

The book is illustrated liberally, as a study of comics should be, with an illustration on every third page, but the pictures are not helpful. I normally expect, with a picture book, to flip through the book, stop at an interesting picture, and browse in the text to find why the author included that example and what he had to say about it. Not with this book. The binding is heavy, stiff and awkward, causing the book to snap shut every time you loosen your grip. Except for a few sample pages, the tiny illustrations turn out not to be worth the trouble of manhandling a book that will not stay open. I saw a few familiar images: work by Hugo Pratt, Gilbert Shelton, Harvey Kurtzman, Chris Donald (from *Viz*) all produced unsatisfactorily. Most of the illustrations were of covers, promotional material or cryptic panels taken out of context. I did not see a single image in the book that would have stimulated me to seek out the original work.

The awkward binding of the book also makes the text a chore to read, with left-hand pages falling


NOW THATS A FISH I'D LIKE TO GET ME HOOK INTO... I'LL SEE IF IT'LL BITE...
GOT A MATCH?
NOT SINCE ERROL FLYNN DIED!
I THINK I'M DOING ALL RIGHT HERE!

Panels from 'Sid the Sexist', *Viz*, no. 9 (1982). Art: Chris Donald. Script: the *Viz* team. © 1982 The creators

away into a crevice-like gutter. The text is no more interesting than the choice of illustrational material. There is a distant, alienated feeling about the whole thing, as if the author viewed his subject as a bizarre sociological phenomenon. In taking such a broad overview, he neglects to tell us much very specific or interesting about the artists, writers and editors: who they are, how they came to the profession, or anything of their special creative characters. In typical journeyman style he reels off names and dates like a grocery list, giving the readers no reason in particular why they should be interested in these people and their books.

As a reader who is already interested, I certainly would have liked to have some personal stories, anecdotes—something to bring some of this stuff to life. I know some of these people, and the ones I know give lively interviews. The fact that Sabin was viewing the phenomenon as an outsider need not have been a disadvantage, because he might have provided some special individual insight. Unfortunately his point of view seems to be that of a disinterested scholar, making a potential text book for studying comics as a curious manifestation of low culture of the later twentieth century. He does not treat it as an art form or show any particular interest in or sensitivity to the special expressive qualities that distinguish the form ("*la bande dessinée*," "the graphic novel," stories in comic form, or simply sequential picture narrative) from novels, illustration, cinema, or from various non-sequential visual art media. Though the territory Sabin deals with has been generally uncharted in book form, there is very little original material in this book, as contrasted, for example, with *The Comics*, Coulton Waugh's 1947 study of newpaper strips, or Judith O'Sullivan's *The Great American Comic Strip* from 1990 which includes biographies of an exhaustive list of contemporary comics creators.

Appendices include the Comics Code printed in full, a lengthy bibliography of books on comics, and a long list of "key British and American comics." Except for the names of a few titles that were new to me, I really did not learn anything new from this book. The text is dry and humorless, as we expect from lengthy studies on the subject of humor. *Adult Comics* seems to be a book written for an audience that not particularly interested in its subject. It is hard for me to envision any reader's *becoming* interested as a result of reading this book.

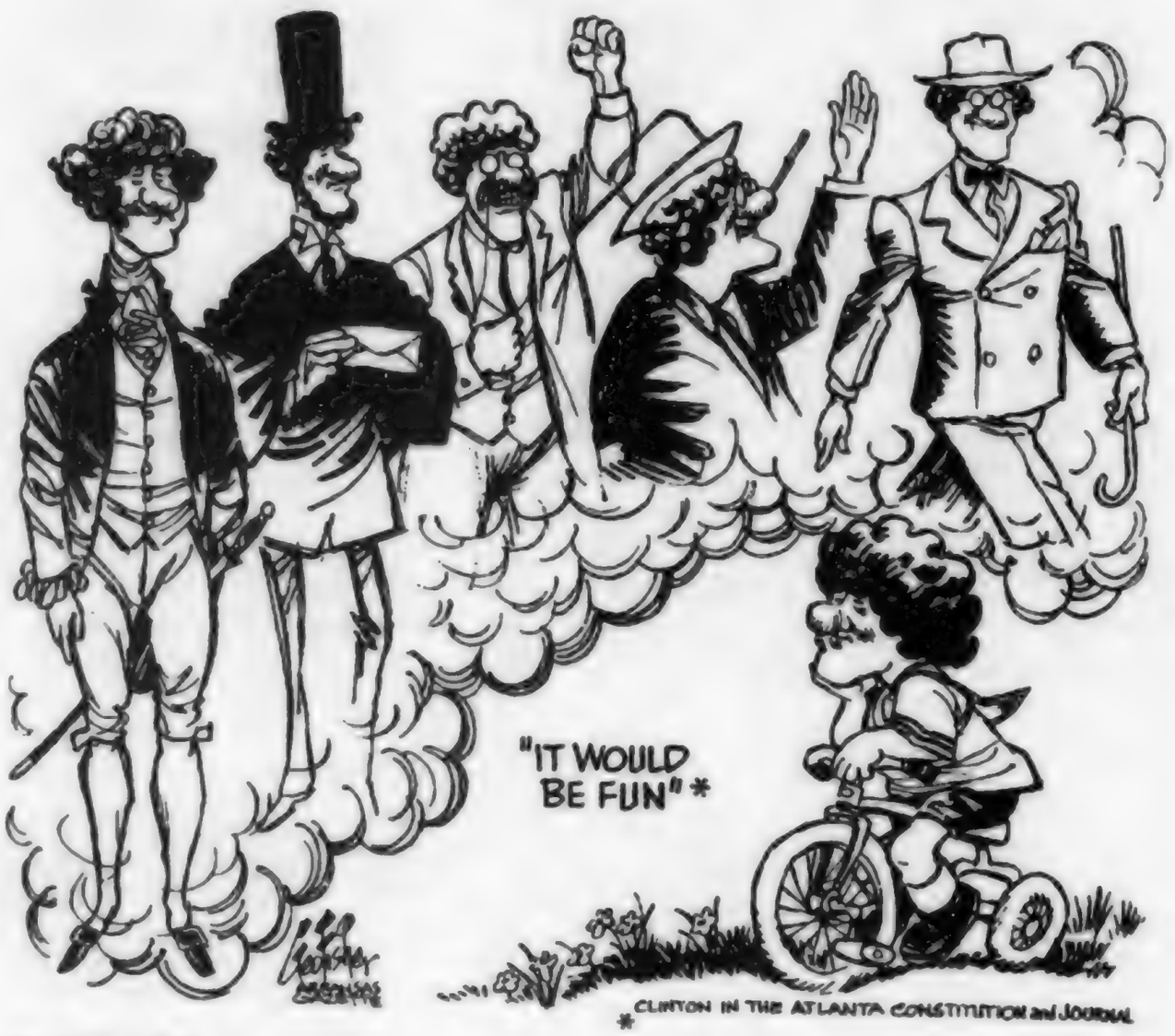
Sabin, Roger. *Adult Comics: An Introduction*. Routledge. 1993. 321 p. index. ISBN 0-415-04418-9 hback. $49.95; ISBN 0-415-04419-7 pap. $15.95.

The Best of Fisher

by George Fisher

Reviewed by James Larrick

George Fisher's work is the classic example of why every newspaper with an editorial page needs its own cartoonist. Fisher is a LOCAL boy. Not provincial, mind you, but LOCAL. Even his national and international cartoons have a local spin and flavor that tailors them to the specific readership of Fisher's newspaper, the *Arkansas Gazette*. When he draws a wry cartoon about the "suffering" of millionaires after the 1987 stock market crash, he features two of Arkansas' most prominent "men of means," poultry magnate Don Tyson and Walmart founder Sam Walton. When he chooses metaphors, they have an Ozark flavor: mules, banjos, farm wagons, hunting dogs, one-room schoolhouses and log cabins—the latter with swayback porches upon



30 May 1985

which sit barefoot good ol' boys in bib overalls.

Not that these images would be misunderstood by anyone living outside the state, but Fisher's cartoons sift even international subjects, such as oil embargoes and world hunger, through an Arkansas filter. In an age when it seems that every bright young cartoonist wants to become nationally syndicated, Fisher proves that the local boy is more useful to his newspaper and more influential with its readership. Editors can buy Pat Oliphant in syndication for a fraction of the cost of hiring their own cartoonist, but Oliphant does not address racism, nuclear power plants, born-again Christians and the University of Arkansas football team with the authority, acumen and homegrown astigmatism of George Fisher.

The Best of Fisher is the cartoonist's eleventh book. In 288 pages and 428 good-sized, cleanly printed illustrations, it spans the nearly thirty years Fisher spent as the *Arkansas Gazette*'s cartoonist, until that paper's demise in 1991. The book is divided into twenty-eight sections, each with a tongue-in-cheek title and a brief, well-written introduction. These introductions are so good, in fact, that a reader unfamiliar with Arkansas politics will still be able to follow the state and local issues and pick up the local flavor on national and international cartoons.

That fact that *all* politics are local is evident in the number of Arkansas political figures with national reputations. Each of the governors featured, for example, is nationally known: Eugene Faubus, Frank White, Dale Bumpers, David Pryor, Winthrop Rockefeller and a young whippersnapper named Bill Clinton. Fisher has the most fun with Faubus and Clinton. Faubus appears variously as a toad, a Victorian house, the capitol dome and a character out of *Li'l Abner*. Clinton, who was the youngest man in Arkansas history to be nominated for governor, spends most of his time riding around on a tricycle. Clinton's tenure as governor included his "bad hair" phase. Fisher's caricatures of him emphasize hair, nose, and chin—in that order.

While on the subject of caricature, it should be mentioned that George Fisher is among the most gifted comic portraitists in the business. His likenesses, although deceptively simple, are always on target. His drawing style, however, has changed radically over the years, and since the cartoons do not follow a chronological order in the book, the reader is often startled to find a page of drawings that appear to have been done by several artists. This is my only quibble with *The Best of Fisher*. The development of his style, which went through a number of phases—including what appear to be Sanders and Conrad periods—should have been tracked.

The book has two especially delightful sections: the first concerns the Old Guard Rest Home, a kind of political pundit's Valhalla, a device for which Fisher is famous. As the years went by, a collection of "segregationists and machine politicians"—including state supreme court justices, sheriffs, mayors, legislators and congressmen—crowded the porch of the ramshackle rest home, commenting on the passing scene. The effect is a lot like a political *Our Boarding House*, with an ever-familiar, yet ever-changing, cast of characters. Gaseous voice balloons fill the air as the non-stop debate rages ever forward—or backward, if you are of Fisher's Southern liberal political persuasion. Even the local hound dog offers his thoughts.

The other delight is what Fisher calls his *Salon de Refusé*, a collection of cartoons that, for various reasons, were turned down for publication. Fisher is mum on

the reasons, and in some cases they are unfathomable—although an educated guess is that the trouble was the message, not the metaphor. What is wrong, for instance, with a parody on Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lesson," showing members of the Arkansas legislature preparing to carve up a plan to reorder taxes and spending?

On the other hand, a cartoon dealing with a rash of congressional sex scandals has an obvious problem: Fisher has replaced the capitol dome with a giant breast, complete with nipple. Fisher admits in the introduction that some of the cartoons were drawn under the assumption they would be killed. As is often the case on Ozark mountain lakes, the best ones are the ones that got away.

Fisher, George. *The Best of Fisher.* University of Arkansas Press. 1993. 288 p. ISBN 1-55728-268-4 hback. $24.95; ISBN 1-55728-269-2 pap. $14.95.

Campaign: A Cartoon History of Bill Clinton's Race for the White House

Edited by Mary Ann Barton and Paul C. Barton

Reviewed by V. Cullum Rogers

Presidential elections have inspired some of the meanest and most enduring images in American political cartooning. Yet there have been few collections of cartoons about specific campaigns, and most of those have been limited to a single artist or newspaper. Until recently, the only such books to include a large number of artists from across the political spectrum have been volume II of Albert Shaw's *Abraham Lincoln* (which covered the election of 1860), Pierce Fredericks' *The People's Choice* (1956) and Sandra Brown's *Car(ter)toons* (1976). To that slim shelf we can now add *Campaign: A Cartoon History of Bill Clinton's Race for the White House*, assembled by two journalists who covered Clinton's Little Rock for the *Arkansas Democrat* and the *Arkansas Gazette*. It contains one hundred twelve works by forty-three editorial cartoonists, three *New Yorker* artists and one illustrator for *American Caucus* magazine.

The cartoons are grouped in twenty-one roughly chronological chapters—some so brief they contain only one drawing—with such titles as "The Draft," "Perotmania" and "The Debate on Debates." The right side of each two-page spread features a single cartoon, with credits and commentary on the left. The credits lack dates and too often identify cartoonists by syndicate rather than newspaper, but the terse commentaries are usually informative. (The one exception, interestingly, accompanies a George Fisher drawing of three Little Rock newspaper editors, who are never identified by name. It is the book's sole cartoon about anti-Clinton sentiment inside his home state.)

Not surprisingly, *Campaign* generally views Clinton's victory as what the authors of *1066 and All That* would have called a Good Thing. The draft, womanizing and uninhaled-pot affairs figure in a number of cartoons and provide metaphors for others, but they tend to be treated as mistakes or personal quirks—like a fondness for Elvis impersonations—rather than as serious reasons to find the candidate wanting on that one-time litmus test, "the character issue." Cartoons attacking George Bush, the Republican party and Ross Perot outnumber those aimed at Clinton and the Democrats roughly three to one.

In this, *Campaign* may just

William Costello in *USA Today*

reflect the anti-Bush state of editorial cartoon opinion at the time, but the book is weakened by the absence of such hard-line Clinton-bashers as Stayskal, Asay and Shelton. In fact, with a few exceptions by such artists as Auth, Kirk and Ramirez, it contains very few cartoons that display deep convictions of either the left or the right. Too many of the rest are little more than jokey put-downs or illustrations of the current headlines. There, also, *Campaign* reflects the state of cartooning in that year—and most others.

Campaign's cover says that it was "compiled and edited" by the Bartons: internal evidence suggests they did more of the former than the latter. Over half the cartoonists—including such major figures as Conrad, Trudeau, and Wilkinson—are represented by only one drawing. If the goal was to include as many artists as possible, why are there ten cartoons by Luckovich, six by Ohman and none by Sargent, Benson, Feiffer and a host of others? Oliphant and Toles are well served with seven cartoons apiece, but should they each have as much space as Peters, Borgman and Don Wright combined? The editors appear to have assembled *Campaign* from whatever they were sent by cartoonists and syndicates who chose to answer a general call for material. This is the usual procedure for compiling editorial-cartoon anthologies, but one expects more from a university press.

And one also expects a higher—much higher—quality of reproduction. The lines in some cartoons, particularly those by KAL and Oliphant, are so thick that large areas that should be gray are solid black, and the mechanical grays in other cartoons are either much too dark or almost invisible. The Marlette on page sixty-nine has lost so much detail that it is hard to identify the main characters as Clinton, Bush and Perot.

Campaign is attractively laid out, but haphazardly collected, and many of the cartoons look like they were printed directly from the first piece of paper the editors saw them on, whether that was a fax, a third-generation photocopy or a page of over-inked newsprint. One New York department store used to have the slogan, "Select, Don't Settle." Barton and Barton would have produced a much better book if they had followed that advice.

Barton, Mary Ann, and Paul C. Barton, eds. *Campaign: A Cartoon History of Bill Clinton's Race for the White House*. University of Arkansas Press. 1993. 224 p. ISBN 1-55728-289-7 pap. $20.00.

A Century of Women Cartoonists

by Trina Robbins

Reviewed by Alice Sheppard

A Century of Women Cartoonists combines numerous illustrations with engaging anecdotes about dozens of American women cartoonists from the 1890s to the present. Its author, artist Trina Robbins, whom Judith O'Sullivan recognized as "the undisputed leader among women underground comics creators,"[1] has delved into comics histories to recall obscure episodes and to enrich our appreciation of the repeated struggles by women for professional achievement in the male-dominated profession of cartooning. The varied and abundantly illustrated format integrates text with images, reprinted in a size well-suited to retaining essential details.

Robbins has chosen to focus exclusively on creators of comics containing "two or more panels, continuity, or speech balloons inside the panel." She has uncovered an amazing array of facts, which with her insider's vantage point makes this an interesting and informative text. The insertion of rare photographs of the artists themselves (portraits of at least twenty-two different individuals and several additional group shots) enhances the reader's introduction to forgotten and unknown women cartoonists.

Each chapter is identified with dominant styles which roughly parallel successive decades. This enables the reader to perceive the vagaries of popular taste such as "The Queens of Cute" and "Blonde Bombers and Girl Commandos." Most people will be astonished to discover the number of significant women contributors, especially in the century's early years, and the variety of creative forms in which they worked is a delight. A particular highlight is the book's final chapter titled "Women, Womyn, Wimmin," which details the recent proliferation of experimental and traditional forms as well as a multitude of rich talents.

Robbins' appreciation of changing historical elements provides a framework for her interpretation of work by individual cartoonists; and yet, paradoxically, it also detracts from narrative's flow. When artists such as Rose O'Neill, Dale Messick, and Marty

The Wimmen's Comix Collective, 1972. Left to right: Michele Brand, Lee Marrs, Lora Fountain, Pat Moodian (editor), Sharon Rudahl, Shelby Sampson, Aline Kominsky, Trina Robbins, Karen Marie Haskell, Janet Wolfe Stanley. Self-portraits by the various artists.

Links reappear in successive chapters which document their continuing careers, it is up to the reader to connect their stories. More significantly, an underlying belief in the historical progression and decline of styles seems refuted by the biographies themselves. For example, one issue is the extent to which individuals conform to and reflect the times: Can we reconcile the fact that Kewpie fan clubs exist to this day with the notion that they convey a mode of thought from 1910?

Another problem for the reader stems from the ease with which women alter their names, adopt pseudonyms, or take on the names from—in more than one case—successive marriages. To reduce confusion the author might have included a chart or summary identifying each woman's name(s), dates, and feature(s). Finally, readers familiar with the 1985 book *Women and the Comics* by Robbins and cat yronwode may be disappointed in the similarity between the two books, even though much new material is evident, such as the attention to African American and lesbian cartoonists.

The largely biographical approach of *A Century of Women Cartoonists* offers limited analysis of factors promoting the success of women as cartoonists. What are the roles of training, mentors, artistic style, public demand, and luck? Nor do we learn much about the strategies which aided Cathy Guisewite and Lynn Johnston, for example, to achieve their enviable commercial positions—and why they have not been followed by a string of younger cartoonists.

A promising feature is the inclusion of statements by women cartoonists concerning women's comic art. Unfortunately, the sampling is less than systematic, and includes a number of glib generalizations such as the statement that two particular artists "possessed the (for women) unusual ability to draw muscular super heroes and violent action" which is followed by a suggestion that "most women cartoonists are not able to compromise [the artistic styles in which they work]." Drawing from abundant sources, one might expect more discussion of the interests and abilities of women cartoonists and, in particular, of their professional differences with males.

Mostly one wishes that the editors had taken their task more seriously, tightening up the text to allow room for additional insights,

eliminating some colloquialisms, and offering the helpful conventions of an index and documentation of sources. Researchers may find it difficult to locate and review information spread across different chapters, and future comics enthusiasts will not be able to track down Fanny Cory's unpublished notebooks or the various newspaper articles quoted, since no hint of their origin is given. These detractions are certainly minor, however, in light of the book's potential offerings to fans, artists, collectors, scholars, feminists, and general readers. It is a celebration of women's achievements and, as such, deserves to be noted carefully and enjoyed.

Robbins, Trina. *A Century of Women Cartoonists.* Kitchen Sink Press. 1993. 180 p. ISBN 0-87816-200-3 pap. $16.95; ISBN 0-87816-201-1 hback. $24.95; ISBN 0-87816-206-2 signed hback. $39.95.

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1. Rebecca Zurier, *Art for The Masses* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 89. [Note that no abbreviation preceeds the page numbers.]
2. Alice Sheppard, "There Were Ladies Present: American Women Cartoonists and Comic Artists in the Early Twentieth Century," *Journal of American Culture* 7(Fall 1984): 38-48.
3. Bill Blackbeard and Martin Williams, eds. *The Smithsonian Collection of Newspaper Comics* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 12.
4. George Newton Gordon, "Can Children Corrupt Our Comics?" in *The Funnies: An American Idiom* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), 158-166.
5. Edwin McDowell, "America Is Taking Comic Books Seriously," *New York Times,* 31 July 1988, E8.

Style for second references:

1. Zurier, *Art for the Masses,* 66.
2. Sheppard, "There Were Ladies Present," 44.
3. Gordon, "Can Children Corrupt Our Comics?" 164.

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